DISCOVERING THE PAST

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, HERITAGE AND RECREATION

1983

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IMPORTANT

EXCAVATING.

13(1) No person shall excavate for historic or archaeological research or purposes or search for or excavate for artifacts, paleontological objects or skeletal remains without a valid subsisting permit to do so issued under the regulations.

Manitoba Historic Sites and Objects Act, S.M., 1966 - 67, c. 22, s. 1.

Manitoba Regulation 30/80

Being a Regulation Under The Historic Sites and Objects Act Respecting Permits for Conducting Archaeological or Paleontological Field Research in the Province of Manitoba

(Filed February 29, 1980)

1. Any person wishing to conduct or carry out archaeological or paleontological field research in Manitoba shall first obtain a permit for the purpose from the Historic Resources Branch, Department of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources.

2. An application for a permit to conduct or carry out archaeological or paleontological field research shall be made on Form 1 attached hereto.

3. There shall be a separate permit for each site or area at which archaeological or paleontological field research is to be carried out.

4. Each permit is subject to the special terms and conditions attached thereto or prescribed thereon.

DISCOVERING THE PAST

An Introduction to the Archaeology and Culture History of the Neepawa and Area Planning District

Papers in Manitoba Archaeology
Popular Series No. 5

by

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Project Archaeologist
Historic Resources Branch

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FOREWORD

The main purpose of this booklet is to inform the residents of the Neepawa and Area Planning District about some of the past human activities that are believed to have taken place in their region. It is meant to be light reading, rather than an encyclopedia of facts and figures. Other, more comprehensive books are available on any one of the topics discussed herein (see the selected Bibliography at the back of the book). However, it is hoped that through the outline presented below, readers will gain a greater appreciation of past events and a fuller understanding of the District's previous residents that will in turn stimulate further interest in their story. A companion work, "Introducing Manitoba Prehistory", provides general information on the entire province. As such, it places the Neepawa area within the broad sequence of prehistoric events that occurred throughout Manitoba.

While the outline is considered to be a generally accurate picture of the past, there are many more chapters to the story than are presented here. Archaeologists have yet to agree on the entire sequence of events that have taken place in the area over the past 10,000 or more years. What is provided here, then, is but an overview of those events. To flesh out the story, readers are urged to consult the other, more comprehensive works. It is an interesting challenge and well worth the effort.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A successful season of archaeological field work is based on a series of inter-related factors. Good weather, efficient transportation and comfortable living conditions make a summer easier. Good fellow workers make the summer a better one.

However, the key factor to the success of a project such as this is the interest and cooperation of the residents and landowners of the area where one is working. The warm and friendly welcome that my assistant and I received from the residents of the Neepawa and Area Planning District bodes well for the future of other such research projects in Manitoba. The identification with the land and its local history by the residents of this area has been a gratifying experience from the very onset of this project. We found that the people are interested in learning about the archaeological history of their area. The intimate knowledge that the owners have of their land, and their willingness to share that knowledge with us, helped us immeasurably in our work. It is incumbent upon the archaeologist to return to the residents of their research area a product that will concisely explain the reasons for, and the results of, their work. It must be remembered that the collections of artifacts that many landowners possess were gathered over the years because of a real interest in the archaeological sites and resources on their land. They are a prized possession; they were not idly collected, and their owners are sincerely interested in learning the stories that lie behind the materials in their hands. The questions asked about their artifacts are indeed similar to those posed by the archaeologist: Why are they found here? What were the ancient people doing in the area? How old are the artifacts? How were they made? The fact that they are being asked by these people places

the responsibility of answering them upon the archaeologist. There must be a dialogue between the researcher and the local people of the area where the research is taking place. If the archaeological sites and the materials they contain are considered important, they must be shown to be important to owners of the land upon which they are found. These people are key participants in the custodianship of Manitoba's cultural heritage: the involvement of the landowner and general public in heritage conservation is necessary if we are to retain a part of the record of the first inhabitants of Manitoba. To not inform people about the research that has taken place and of our findings diminishes the value that we as archaeologists place on the work we are doing.

It is hoped that this booklet will answer many of the questions that the people of the Neepawa area have concerning the prehistory of their district in this, their centennial year. It is also hoped that it will generate feedback to our program of heritage conservation and development in Manitoba.

The following people were central in the success of our 1982 and 1983 field seasons. Numerous sites were brought to our attention through their efforts. Many of the important artifacts were found in their collections. I would like to thank them all personally for the help they provided and the friendship they showed, and hope that some day I will (personally) have that opportunity.

Mr. & Mrs. A. Ambler
Mr. M.P. Ames
Mr. A.N. Andrusiak
Mrs. J. Andrusiak
Mr. Barry Baker
Mr. R.G. Baker
Mr. Doug Baron
Mrs. M.J. Batters
Mrs. W. Bay
Mr. S. Breise & Family
Mr. B. Bremner & Family
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Brookdale Hutterite Colony

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Mr. W.R. Burton
Mr. C. Cameron
Mrs. Eva Campbell
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Mr. & Mrs. Mel Chambers
Mr. L. Chemerika
Mr. R. Chemerika
Mr. B.F. Cook
Mr. F.H. Cook
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Mr. & Mrs. J. Kolesar
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Mr. D.E. Kostenchuk
Mr. Nestor Kostenchuk
Mr. Nick Kostenchuk
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Mr. & Mrs. R.B. Lowry
Mrs. A.R. Mack
Mr. Dan Mack & Family
Mr. & Mrs. John Mack
Mrs. M. MacKenzie
Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation
Mr. & Mrs. K.A. Marten
Mr. T. Marten
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Mr. L. Wright
Mr. S. Wrightson
Mr. & Mrs. D. Yerex
Mr. A.G. Young

I would also like to thank Mr. Brian J. Smith, my field assistant, for the able and diligent work he performed during both the summer season and the winter laboratory sessions. Dorothy Pedersen, a high school student from Nbepawa who volunteered part of her summer to work with us was of great help. Leo Pettipas, Staff Archaeologist, Historic Resources Branch, availed me the opportunity to undertake this work, and I thank him for all his help in seeing it through to its conclusion. Thanks are also in order to Joan Wachs for typing the final draft of this report. Nancy Anderson, Gord Hill and Gary Dickson were generous in their interest, help and comments during the writing of this booklet. Larry Jamieson deserves special mention for the fine drawings he produced to accompany the text of this booklet, and Tony Buchner lent a willing hand to the logistics of ending the 1983 field season. For any errors or omissions that may appear in the manuscript, the responsibility is entirely mine.

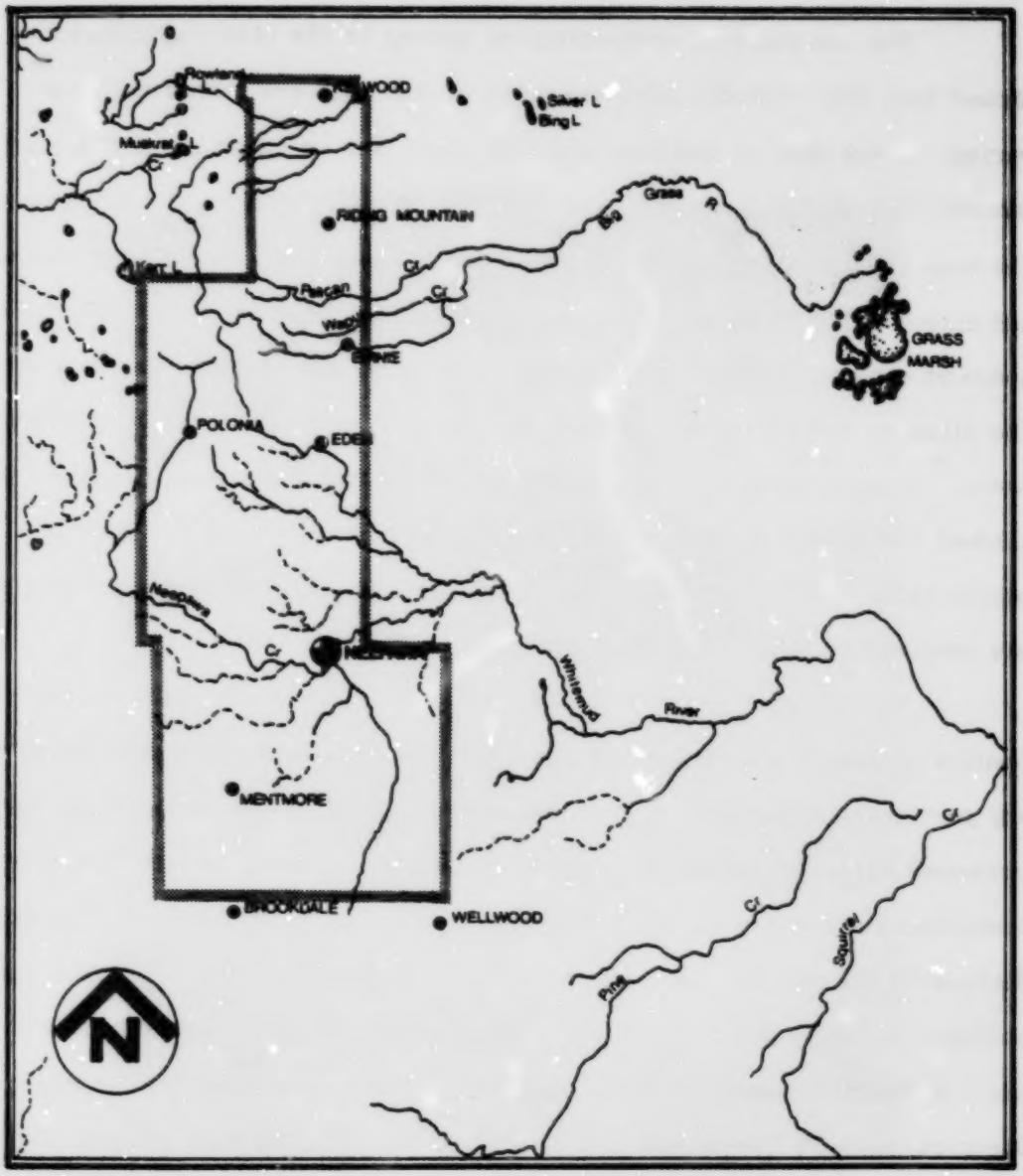
D.K. Riddle

Project Archaeologist

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological work in the Neepawa and Area Planning District is part of an ongoing, long-range program of archaeological site inventory being conducted in the province of Manitoba. The program, initiated by the Historic Resources Branch of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, uses planning districts as a means of adding to the "Archaeological Sites Inventory of Manitoba". The Inventory is composed of a large number of standardized forms containing information about the known archaeological sites in the province. This information is a useful tool for research purposes, and is used as an aid in planning the preservation and orderly development of Manitoba's archaeological resources.

Heritage resource management forms part of the overall development plan for this District, which comprises the municipalities of Rosedale and Langford. The development plan "... has the overall goal or objective of enhancing the physical, socio-economic, and environmental opportunities for the people of the Planning District. Inherent in this goal are orderly and efficient development, equality, enhancement of aesthetics and the environment, and the principle of public involvement." With particular regard to archaeological heritage resources: "although few prehistoric archaeological sites have been identified in the Planning District to date, the area was part of the Southern Manitoba region, which experienced a long and colourful pre-history. Thus it can be predicted that abundant archaeological resources exist in the Planning District, but intensive field inventory, research, and analysis is required to confirm this prediction" (Underwood McLellan Ltd. 1982:50).

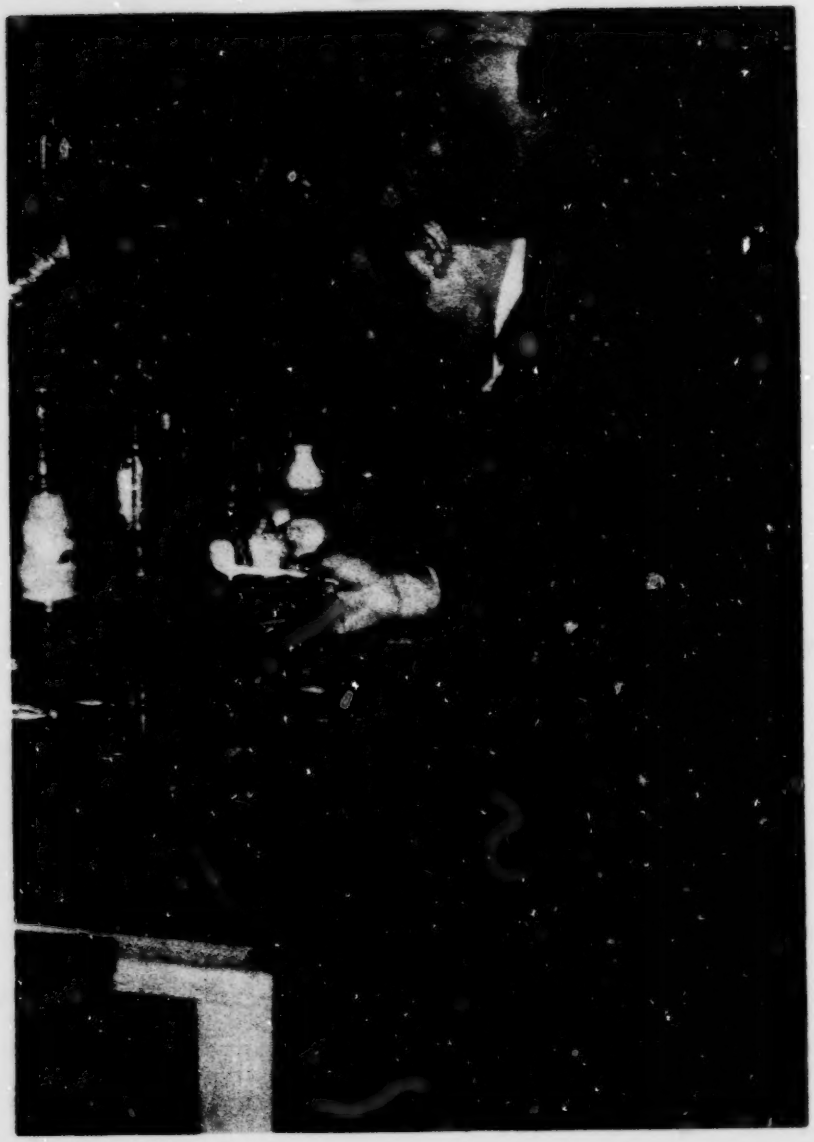


A portion of southwestern Manitoba, including the Neepawa and Area Planning District.

The two years of archaeological survey in the Planning District showed that the archaeological resources of the area are indeed rich and varied. A key part of the 1982 and 1983 work, and an important factor in the success of both field seasons, was the involvement of the local residents of the area in the survey. Through considerable press and television coverage and direct mailings to the District residents, the population at large became aware of our activities. Most of the collections and collectors, and many of the sites we eventually documented, were brought to our attention by these means. Significantly, this awareness generated an interest in our work that allowed for immediate feed-back to the people of the area in the form of public talks and T.V. coverage. In turn, land access, co-operation and help was received in return for these efforts.

This booklet is intended to form a preliminary statement on the results of the work done in 1982 and 1983. It is general (not pertaining to any particular site) and has been produced to acquaint the reader with the processes which are believed to have led to the continued use of this area by prehistoric man for the past 10,000 years. The following pages contain an outline of the natural and cultural history as they are presently known for Southern Manitoba, and some of the ways in which the province was utilized by man. Although intended to be an outline for the Neepawa and Area Planning District, much of the information used is drawn from the more general region of Southern Manitoba and beyond. The still small amount of such information as yet available from the District proper necessitates this approach. Archaeology is a young, though growing and dynamic field of investigation. Most of the generally accepted archaeological knowledge of Southern Manitoba and the Northeastern Plains is less than 25 years old; very little of our

Searching for the past: patience and a keen eye are essential in the conduct of archaeological field survey.



Project Archaeologist David Riddle and assistant Brian Smith examine an artifact collection. The excellent co-operation of local residents was of tremendous assistance in the field and instrumental in the preparation of this book.

archaeological knowledge is more than 50 years old. Therefore, considerable work has yet to be done before detailed statements can be made of such specific areas as this Planning District. How man adapted to and utilized an area down through the ages is a complex problem, requiring much time and effort. It has yet to be specifically addressed on a local level in southwestern Manitoba and is beyond the scope of this work. However, since we must use whatever information is at hand, and develop and nurture that information to expand our knowledge, it is hoped that even this initial outline of human prehistory will be of use and interest to the present residents of the Nbepawa and Area Planning District.

NAMES, LABELS .....

One of mankind's most outstanding abilities is that which permits us to apply names to the things around us. In so doing, we are able to organize our experiences and communicate them to one another. This custom applies not only to the everyday world, but to the realm of science as well. It is routine practice in all fields of scientific study to designate and order information, or "data", according to a standard system of classification, or "taxonomy". What we would like to do in the next few paragraphs is explain how these names are derived and how they are put to use. It is important to realize at the outset that archaeologists have done the naming of archaeological cultures, usually after a nearby place, and not the people of whom we are speaking. Except for the very late groups, we will never know what the ancient people actually called themselves.

Much of the time sequence, or "chronology", that has been developed is based on the shape and style or projectile points (spear, dart, or arrow points). Such points are referred to as "diagnostic" because they are readily

identifiable and distinctive of a certain time period and/or a particular tribal culture. The Canadian flag is a good example of a diagnostic trait of present Canadian culture. Examples of these diagnostic tools — "Clovis", "Folsom" or "Oxbow" projectile points — are all named after places near which they were discovered archaeologically, i.e., Clovis and Folsom, New Mexico; Oxbow, Saskatchewan. The same applies to ceramic wares: "Laurel" and "Blackduck", Minnesota, have lent their names to such prehistoric pottery wares.

Geologists also use this technique. The "Campbell" shoreline, or "strandline", of Glacial Lake Agassiz, which has been traced for hundreds of miles in both Canada and the United States, was first studied near the town of Campbell, Minnesota; it could just as easily have been named the "Arden" strandline if the first study had been done in this area (both Campbell and Arden are situated on this ancient beach). Similarly, if a distinctive kind of pottery or projectile point type were to be found in the Neepawa area in the future, Neepawa too could find its name appearing in the archaeologist's vocabulary. To be fair to the reader, however, the "jargon" of the archaeologist has been used as little as possible in this booklet. Where new terms are introduced, it is hoped they are explained to the reader's satisfaction.

..... AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Simply stated, archaeology is the study of past lifeways. No written records of Manitoba's prehistoric inhabitants are available because they did not possess a form of writing. Consequently, archaeology is the only means of acquiring information about these people — how and when they lived, and the ways in which they adapted themselves to cultural, social and environmental change.

As archaeologists, we cannot study outstanding personages and individuals; that luxury is reserved for historians, who study societies that left written records. Even then, much of the historic record is far from complete and is in many cases biased in favour of persons and events whose records, by chance, happened to be preserved. Much of the archaeological record left in the ground also comes to us by chance. The remains of a campsite that has not been plowed or eroded by wind and water is a rare find in the Nesepawa area. Most of the sites so far found, in fact, are in plowed fields or in sand blow-outs. The ravages of time have taken a considerable toll of the prehistoric record of the area's first inhabitants. This makes whatever is left all the more important to the student of the past.

Like history, the archaeological record is also biased. Little or nothing can be expected to remain in the ground relating to the language, philosophy, child-rearing practices, political make-up, or to the affection that people had for each other at their campsites. However, for any human group to function successfully, all of these factors must have been part of their way of life, and to think of prehistoric Manitobans in these terms brings us a giant step forward in seeing them as people. Too many times, collectors, archaeologists and the general public think and talk about artifacts to the exclusion of the people who made them. A stone arrowpoint can be viewed as a relic, a weapon or tool, a form of time marker that can be used to determine the antiquity of an archaeological site, or all of those things; but such an artifact can tell us much more. It can also be perceived as the result of the intelligence and skill of a man who had experience in hunting and killing game, and who knew what he wanted and how to make what he needed to do the job. If we, the people of today, can take that giant step

beyond the artifact itself and realize that, at many campsites, the day-to-day life of the people revolved around many difficulties that are similar to our own, we may find more in common with our predecessors than we thought possible. Although they must surely have had a vastly different world view and lived a different kind of lifestyle than the people of today, the past peoples of the Nsepawa area were part of our family of Man; they too had every-day problems and possessed family, group and political unity. We must view this part of our interest and study of archaeology in such a way that the humanity of our subject becomes clear to us.

Man's need for food, clothing and shelter is universal. How people satisfy those needs is based on the resources available in the environment in which they live, how they determine what available resources are usable, and how they decide to use those resources in terms of their cultural heritage.

Nature's bounty in the Nsepawa area is a rich one, although it has changed at various times in the past and is very different today from what it was when Native groups held sway over the area. The study of these resources forms a key part of the archaeological record, as we shall see.

The long-range weather conditions (climate) of the area are also an important consideration in the study of archaeology. Fluctuations in temperature and precipitation cause marked changes in both the plant and animal communities present. These changes can affect man's food-getting methods in major ways. For example, resources that have traditionally been the main form of food can become scarce or disappear. Conversely, food resources which were formerly scarce can become important because of their increase in numbers and volume. These kinds of significant changes can be detected in the archaeological sites of the area. A major increase or decrease in the type of

animal bones or burnt seeds found in sites over a long time period can indicate adjustments that the people of the area made to new conditions and food resources.

Substantial climatic changes can also lead to population shifts, since such changes occur over large areas. Groups of people may move considerable distances in an effort to find the game that they have traditionally hunted. Successful groups that grow in size may have to split up and move so that local food resources are not over-exploited. Evidence of these movements can be seen in archaeological sites in the form of different hunting tools and weapons becoming common in an area where formerly none such were found.

Man is also an inventor, innovator, and borrower of ideas. In his attempt to make a better life for himself, new ideas are frequently being considered. Many are rejected but some become part of the way of life, or "customs", of a people. Examples of these ideas can be seen in the archaeological record of the Neepawa area. The introduction of pottery-making and the use of the bow and arrow are examples of major innovations. These changes occurred some 2000 years ago and were used by local residents up to and on into the Historic Period that was ushered in with the coming of the white man a little over 200 years ago.

Nor did the populations of Native peoples inhabiting the Neepawa area at any particular time live in a social vacuum. Whether through war, trade, migration or exchange of members from one population to another, new ideas and

concepts were learned and adopted. Direct evidence of exchange and trade with other regions is found throughout Southern Manitoba. Copper from the Great Lakes, obsidian (volcanic glass) from the Rocky Mountains and shells from the Pacific Coast and the Gulf of Mexico have been found in the archaeological sites of Southern Manitoba. These items, generally common in their place of origin, became valuable because they were considered rare or exotic here.

It is not known at present what the residents of Southern Manitoba traded for these "exotic" goods, but their presence shows that contacts did take place over great distances. Whether these contacts were direct ones or whether intermediate ("middlemen") groups were involved is unclear, although the latter is most likely the case.

Concurrent with the trade of items was the exchange of ideas. There is direct evidence in Southern Manitoba of religious and spiritual beliefs whose origins lie in the American Midwest. Likely, some of these original ideas were in turn borrowed from further south in Mexico. It is clear that far-ranging cultural, religious, and economic concepts and items from various parts of North America were part of the life way of early residents of Southern Manitoba and the Neepawa area.

It is hoped that the preceding paragraphs have succeeded in some measure to dispell any notion that the first residents of the Neepawa area might have been backward primitives who lived in a small, isolated world all of their own. For indeed, quite the opposite is true; the early cultures that have been recognized in the Neepawa area were both conservative and dynamic, according to circumstances and opportunity. The peoples of antiquity learned to deal with the problems of making a living successfully, as can be seen in the thousands of years of occupation and evidence left by man in this area.

As the archaeologist continues to glean information from these prehistoric sites, further insights into the lifeways of the first residents will be obtained. However, the record of these peoples' activities is a fragile one, and protection and appreciation of our heritage resources is necessary, since without them further study is impossible. The following quote by Dr. Charles R. McGimsey III on the fate of archaeological sites and resources in the United States is true of Southern Manitoba as well:

> The next fifty years - some would say twenty-five - are going to be the most critical in the history of American archaeology. What is recovered, what is preserved, and how these goals are accomplished during this period will largely determine for all time the knowledge available to subsequent generations of Americans concerning their heritage from the past. It is incumbent upon all persons knowledgeable about or interested in archaeology, to whatever degree, to do their utmost now to insure that the maximum amount of critical data is preserved. Our generation cannot postpone the decision to work toward this preservation, for the forces of destruction are multiplying and gaining momentum. The next generation cannot study or preserve what already has been destroyed (McGimsey 1970:1).

Archaeological resources, like oil and minerals, are finite resources. It is impossible to re-make or regain information from a lost, destroyed or vandalized archaeological site; once it is gone, it is gone forever. It is hoped that archaeological study will continue to shed new light on Manitoba's first residents. We all share the responsibility of protecting the cultural heritage left to us by our predecessors. We owe that as much to the future as we do to the past.

LAYING TO REST SOME MISCONCEPTIONS

Archaeologists

Probably the first picture that comes into a person's mind when thinking of an archaeologist is one that has come to us from the movies. Usually, the image is one of an older, bearded gentleman in a tomb in Egypt,

magnifying glass in hand, either having just found a magnificent treasure of gold or jewels, or about to be strangled by a cloth-covered mummy! The former has happened, the latter is doubtful, and while there are archaeologists in Egypt, archaeology goes on in virtually every part of the world.

The men and women who do archaeology possess a wide range of interests and come from as broad a spectrum of backgrounds. Some may have entered the field with previous training in chemistry or physics and have seen an opportunity to study prehistoric sites or remains using the natural and physical sciences. Others may contribute their skills as mathematicians and computer experts in solving problems dealing with very large samples of apparently unrelated data. Many have interests in the fields of geography, biology, botany, and environmental studies, using their skills to interpret information on natural history, climatic change, and past communities of flora and fauna. Others may be interested in developing methods of excavating archaeological sites or surveying areas that will shed more light on the past occupations of people in a given area. Therefore, archaeologists do not all come from the same mold and some may seem to have more in common with scientists from other disciplines than they do with each other. However, all have an interest in some aspect of man's past, and all use each other's findings and knowledge to help overcome shortcomings and limitations in individual backgrounds. This is true whether the specific area of study is Central Asia, New Zealand, or Manitoba. Clearly, this range of backgrounds and interests and the exchange of information allows a group of archaeologists from an area, in sum, to delve much deeper into their subject than could any one individual.

Artifacts and Archaeologists

In their attempt to reconstruct as much as possible of the lifeways of the peoples who formerly inhabited an area, archaeologists regard the information and artifacts that are collected as a means to an end, namely, a better understanding of those past times and people. Hence, the collection of the stone tools, pottery fragments, or "potsherds", and bone are only a small part of the overall process involved in the study. To do a credible job, knowledge of the past climate, geological history, past plant communities and animal populations form a major part of the work and must be inter-related with the artifacts and features left by the human population. An archaeologist, then, is not simply interested in collecting artifacts for the sake of collecting: their real value lies in the information they can provide, and the true value of any artifact can only be looked at in terms of the knowledge it conveys. The information value is directly related to the spot in which the specimen is found and how it relates to other artifacts from that area. If that knowledge is somehow lost, the artifact becomes virtually, if not totally, worthless as a source of useful information about the past.

Some people are willing to buy or trade artifacts, paying a few dollars for a particularly well-made or "rare" item. Unfortunately, these artifacts are often taken out of the province before they are recorded by an archaeologist. Others may form part of a collector's showcase, but if the artifacts are not properly labelled and documented, they are of little use in studying our past. It is tragic, then, that with the exchange of a few dollars, an important part of our knowledge of the past can be lost forever. We will never know how much of our heritage has already been lost by this means.

Dinosaurs, Sharks' Teeth, Fossils and Archaeologists

The last dinosaur died millions of years before man appeared on earth. The fossil clam shells and shark's teeth found in the shales of the Manitoba Escarpment were also laid down millions or hundreds of millions of years ago. Scientists who study such fossil remains are called "palaeontologists". The study of fossils falls outside of the realm of archaeology.

How Deep Does the Archaeologist Dig?

This question is probably the most common one asked of archaeologists. The logical assumption would be that the older a site is, the more deeply it is buried. In actual fact, there is no absolute rule or "correct" answer. Many times, archaeological investigations require no digging at all. The reasons for this may lie with the fact that the investigator is studying how glacial activity may determine the location of early archaeological sites. Or, the archaeologist may wish to investigate how wind, water or the plow have damaged a site to the point where digging it would prove to be of little value since much of its detailed information has already been lost.

Some sites from the open plains west or south of Neepawa may require as little as 10 cm of excavation because there has been very little soil build-up since the end of the Ice Age. On the other hand, those in a regularly flooded river valley such as that of the Whitemud River may require several metres of digging to reach the lowest artifact-bearing levels. Each site and situation is a different one and must be approached on its own terms.

How Were Stone Tools Made?

Anyone who has found stone tools in their fields has likely wondered how they were manufactured.

There is no truth in the rumour that flakes were removed by dropping hot water on the edge of the stone, or partially-finished tool. Also, since stone is very hard, it is impossible, contrary to popular belief, to wear a "thumb-groove" or "finger-hold" into a stone tool through use. To set the record straight, let us review some of the details of stone tool manufacture.

The process of making a tool from a stone, called "flint knapping", is an exacting one requiring skill, knowledge and ability. The first step in making a chipped stone tool is to acquire the right kind of raw material, since not just any rock will do. It must be hard and durable but not brittle, and must also produce "conchoidal" or cone-like fractures when struck. A good example of a conchoidal fracture is a hole made by a B.B. shot in a window pane, where the break spreads out from the point of impact in a cone-shaped pattern. Glass is a good medium to use in making copies of native tools and indeed, a form of natural glass, called "obsidian", was so used by prehistoric Manitobans. The kinds of stones most frequently used by prehistoric flint-knappers in the Neepawa District, however, were a variety of cherts and chalcedonies. Raw materials such as "Swan River Chert", found locally, and Knife River Flint, a brown chalcedony imported from the Knife River area of North Dakota, are the most conspicuous in the archaeological sites. Knife River Flint is an excellent material from which to fashion flaked stone tools, and was no doubt the preferred kind of stone when it was available.

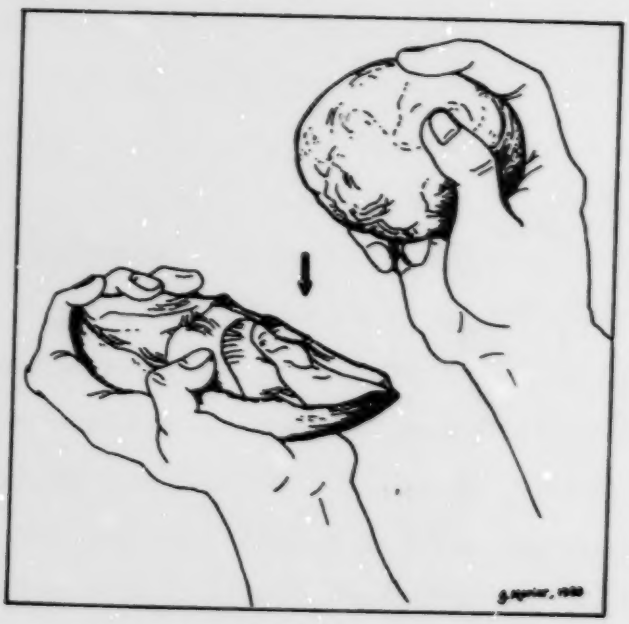
The next step in making a tool is to remove a flake from the cobble, or "core" of raw material. This is normally done by preparing a "platform" on the edge of the core so that control on how the flakes are removed can be maintained.

Hammerstones or antler or bone "billets" may be used in the removal of these flakes. This process is called "percussion flaking" because it involves the actual striking of the core with another object (the percussor). When a large suitable flake is so obtained, it is also percussion-flaked so that the rough form of the desired tool is produced.

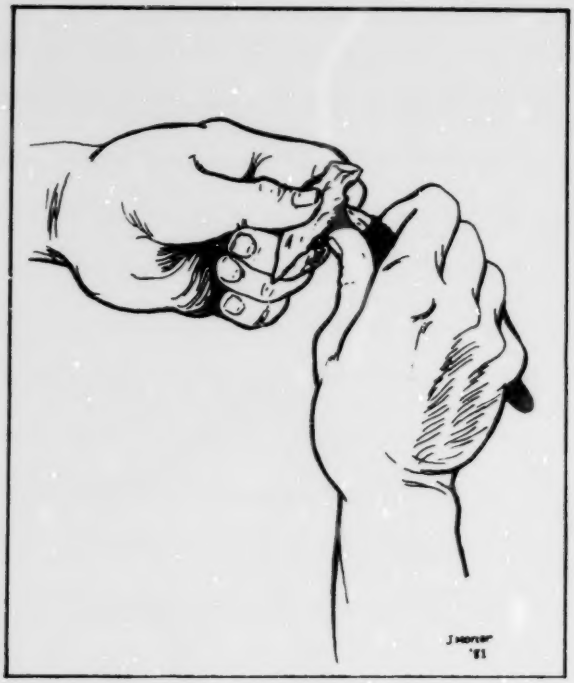
The final step in the making of a tool is called "pressure flaking". This involves placing the tip of an antler, piece of bone, or other narrow, hard object against the edge of the artifact and exerting pressure against it until a small flake is forced off. Free-hand pressure flaking is a finishing process that is used to remove excess stone in the thinning of the piece, in straightening or sharpening edges of tools, and in resharpening broken tools.

At any point in the process a misplaced blow, too much pressure, or a flaw in the material can cause the tool to break. One needed to become familiar with the properties of the raw material being used and highly skilled to produce a certain style of projectile point or certain other kinds of stone tool. Young boys no doubt "apprenticed" with an older relative to acquire the expertise involved in making the tools so necessary for their survival in adult life.

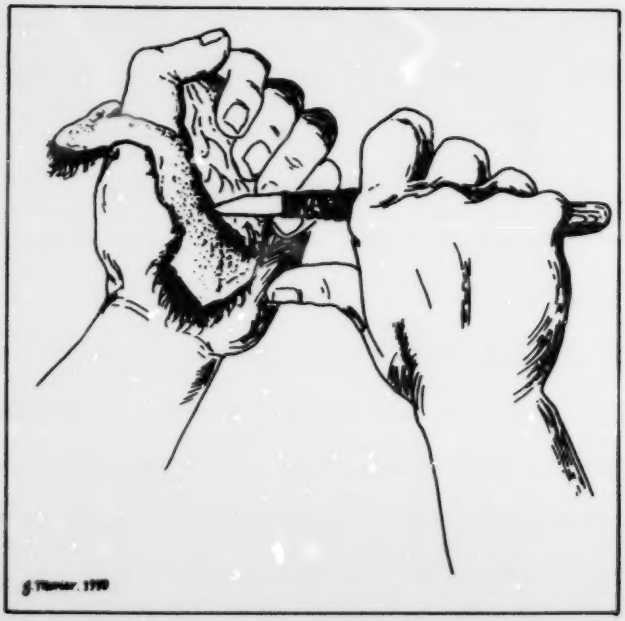
The early residents of Manitoba used other methods to produce different forms of stone tools. Pecking and grinding were employed to form many of the larger tools found in the Neepawa area. The most common artifact in the local collections, the hammerstone or grooved maul, was made by slowly pecking a groove with a smaller, hard rock into a naturally formed round or oval cobble of granite. A wooden handle, wrapped with wet rawhide, would be attached to the stone so that when the rawhide shrank and dried, it would firmly hold the handle to the maul. These tools were probably used for a



Two methods of percussion flaking: Top -- the anvil, or "bi-polar" technique; Bottom -- free-hand percussion.



Two variations of pressure flaking. The work depicted in the lower picture is more vigorous than that shown above, and a protective leather pad is used to protect the worker's left hand from the sharp point of the flaker and the sharp flakes that are driven off.



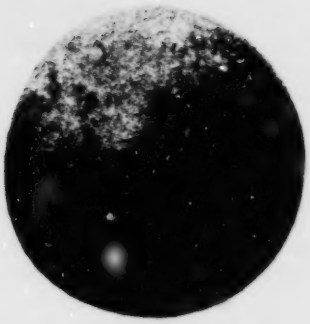
variety of purposes: grinding seeds and berries, breaking nuts, pounding meat and cracking open animal bone to extract the nutritious marrow.

Axes and adzes were also made by pecking and grinding. Suitable rocks such as basalt or hard slates were first roughly shaped by percussion if unsuitable in their natural form. Next, the surface was pecked away to produce the proper shape and then ground on an abrasive, such as a sandstone slab. The tool was then finely polished with damp leather and sand, or a fine sandstone. Useful for a variety of purposes, they were likely a key part of any wood-working industry the people possessed. Only a few of these ground stone tools have been found in the local collections in the Neepawa area.

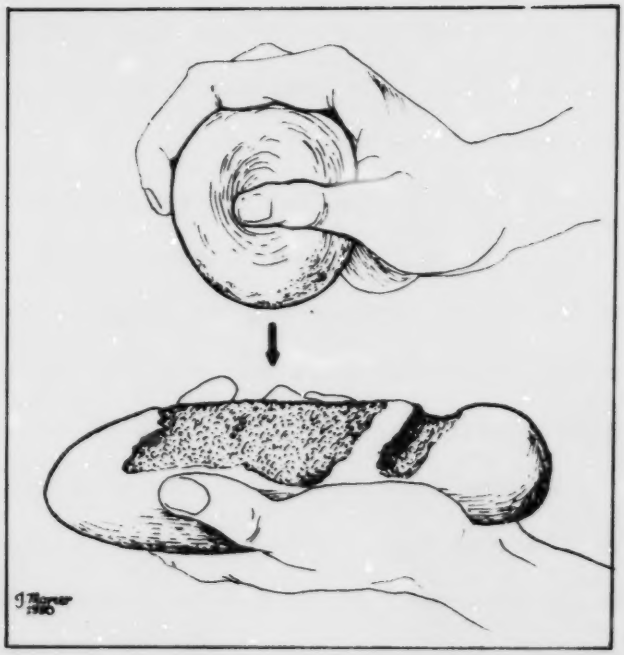
By far the most common artifacts found in archaeological sites are the waste flakes from the production of stone tools. Although discarded by the flintknapper as garbage, they can yield much information on the processes he used in making stone tools. Many times, the only indications of human activity found at an archaeological site in the Neepawa area are a few chips of stone left by an early craftsman.

How Long Has the Neepawa Area Been Occupied?

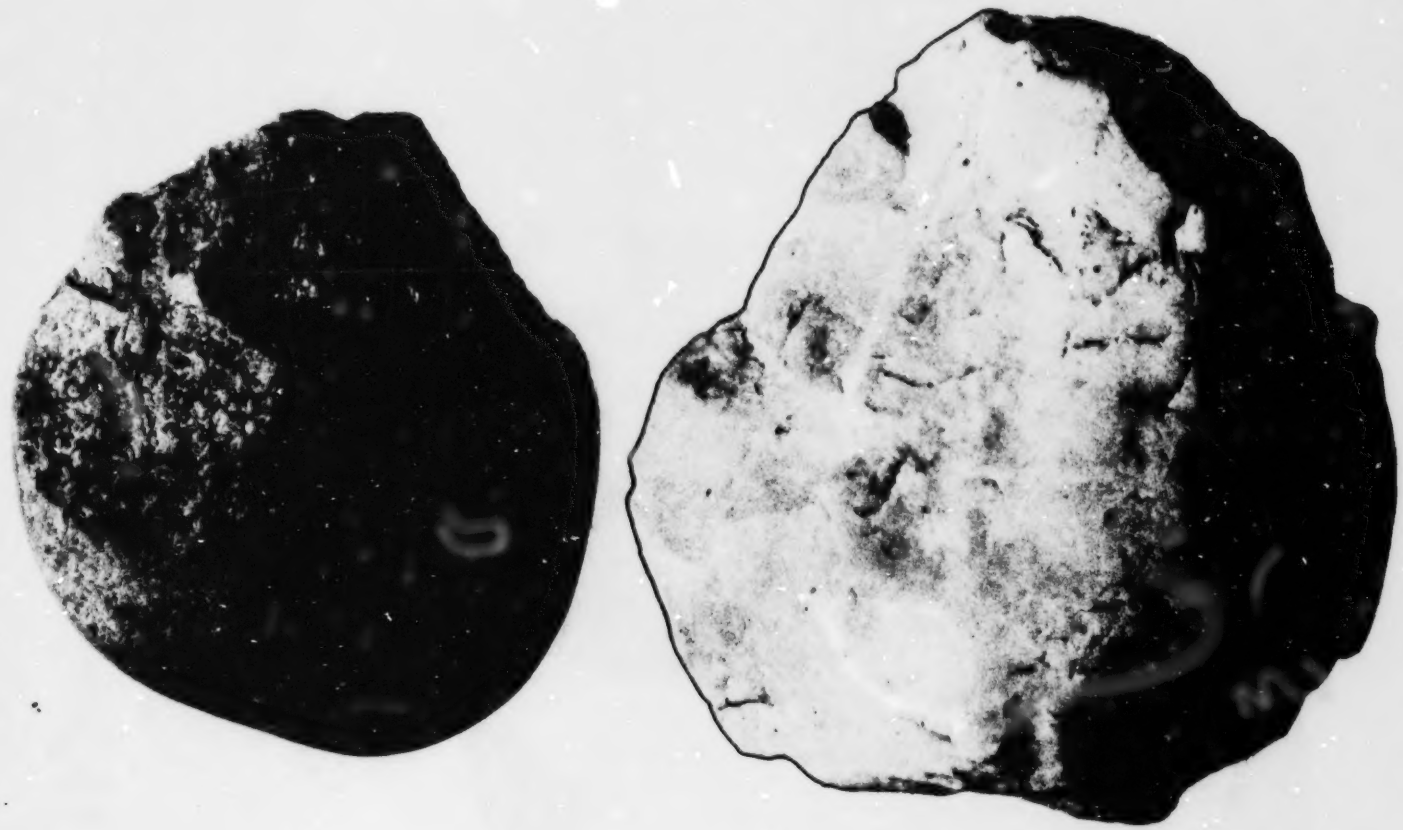
It is difficult to imagine 10,000 years of human occupation in the Neepawa area, although this estimate is likely quite accurate. Reference points are needed if we are to reflect upon such a great expanse of time. One hundred years ago, in the 1870s and 1880s, the first settlers began farming in the Neepawa area. The first people to come here to hunt arrived 100 times earlier than that. If a generation is some 25 years, then 400 generations of people have used the land in the Neepawa area. When one thinks of one's grandfather's father as being an "early" settler, we must then think of a further 400 generations of people to get back to the earliest date of human occupation. This is a very long time indeed.



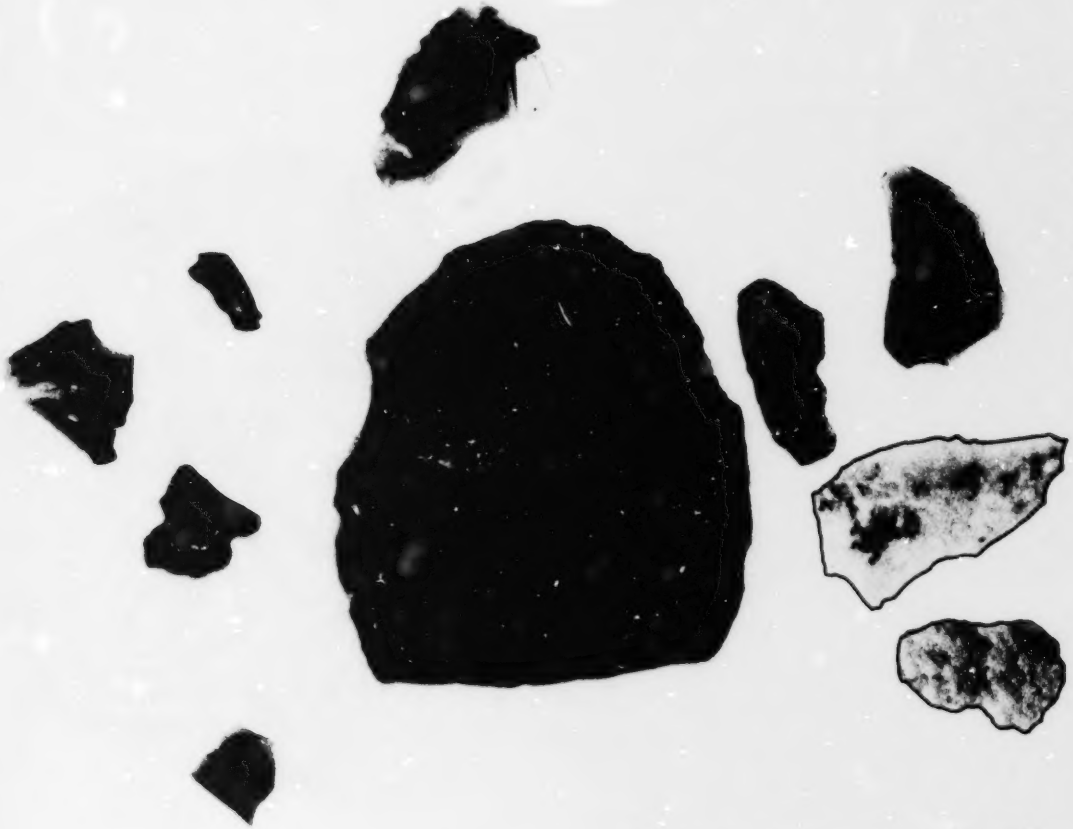
A small hammerstone or pecking stone, used perhaps to work grooves into hammerstones and to prepare ground stone tools (see below). It could also have been used to remove flakes, using the percussion technique, from cores of stone when making tools. Natural size.



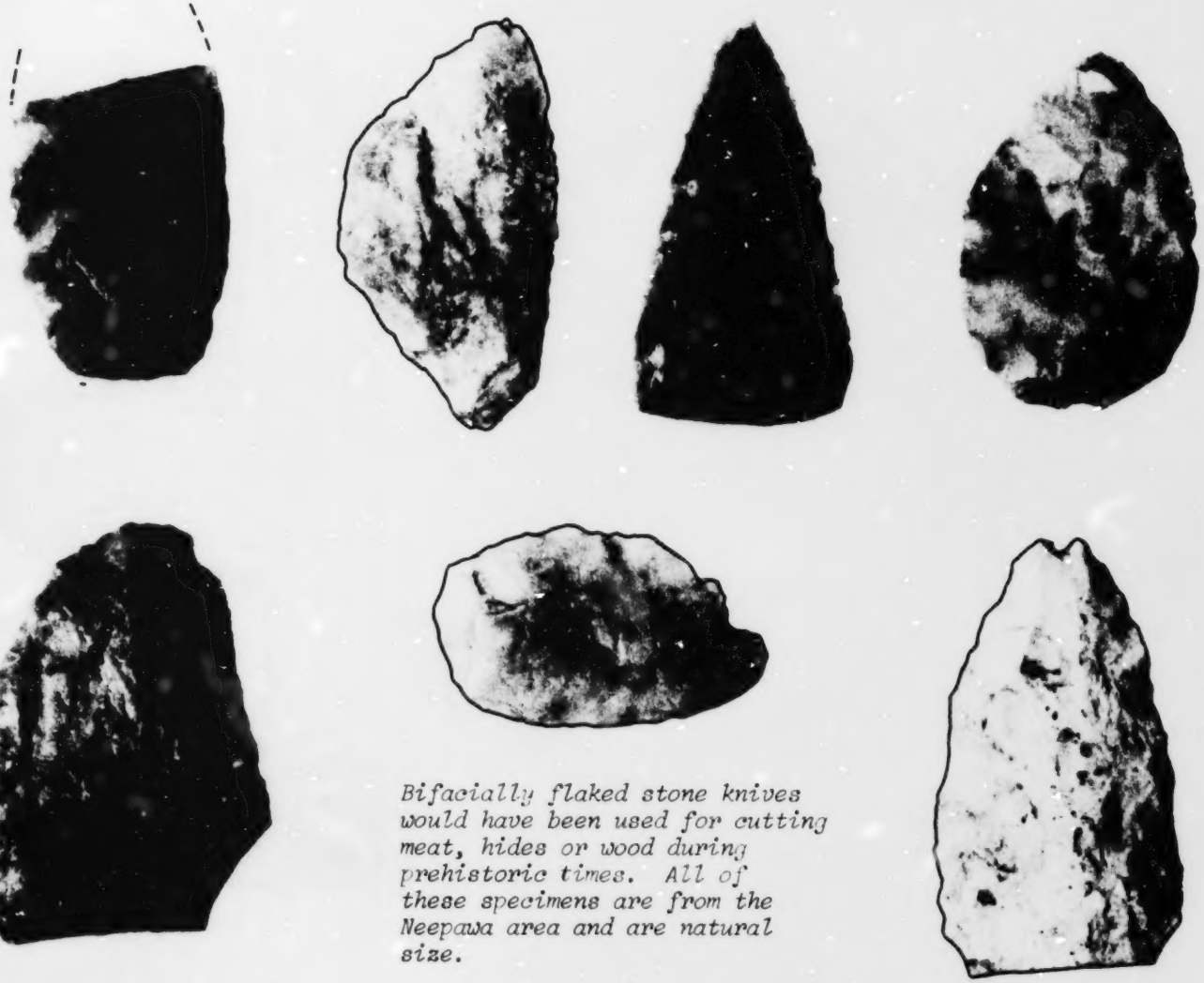
Use of the hammerstone of the kind shown above in the preparation of a stone axe.



Quartzite cores from the Neepawa and Area Planning District. Natural size.



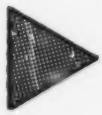
Cores of quartzite, Swan River Chert and Knife River Flint were the sources of stone flakes which prehistoric flint knappers made into stone tools. These small waste flakes of lithic reduction are all that remains at some archaeological sites in the Neepawa area.



Bifacially flaked stone knives would have been used for cutting meat, hides or wood during prehistoric times. All of these specimens are from the Neepawa area and are natural size.

The drill on the left would have been used to pierce hide, bone or wood while the "spokeshaves", with the concavities worked into one edge (arrows), would have been used by early craftsmen to smooth bone or wood items. Artifacts are actual size.

Stone scrapers were used in preparing hides for clothing, and in the smoothing of wood and bone in the manufacture of other tools. Often they would be hafted into a bone handle to allow greater pressure to be exerted than was possible if the tool was simply held in the hand. All of these specimens are end scrapers except the one marked D, which is a side scraper. These names are applied in consideration of the location of the working edges (dashed lines). All specimens are natural size.



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Indians and the Horse

The Indian brave mounted bareback on a horse, spear or bow and arrow in hand, is the popular image of the Plains Indian or of Indians in general for many people. While this conception is likely true of the last 150 years or so of Native dominance of the North American Grasslands, the horse is actually a late addition to Plains Indian culture.

Professor William Newcomb, in his book "North American Indians: An Anthropological Perspective", describes the romance and history of the acquisition of the horse by these people, and provides background on the "pre-horse" period for us. His description of the affects of the horse on the formerly pedestrian groups is also detailed. What should be noted is (1) the short duration of the use of the horse; (2) the major changes that took place in the cultures of those who used the horse; and (3) that for the vast majority of time, the Native people of the Neepawa area made their way about on their own two feet.

Battlegrounds, War Points, Bird Points, Etc.

Often, while conducting a survey, the archaeologist will hear of a site that is described as a former battleground or scene of a massacre. The rumour of this battle is usually quite widespread and is often considered to be fact by the residents of the area. Without a doubt, battlegrounds do occur and wars and massacres did take place. More often than not, however, the "battleground" in question can be shown to be something else -- usually a large campsite where, because of the numbers of projectile points found over the years, the rumours of war have arisen. When the archaeologist visits the site, quantities of other tools, flakes and animal bone are observed and, as these are normally indications of a campsite, the "battleground" theory can be dismissed.

This map depicts the spread of the horse over the Plains region (shaded area) of North America during the Historic Period. Note that it did not appear in Southern Manitoba until around 1770.

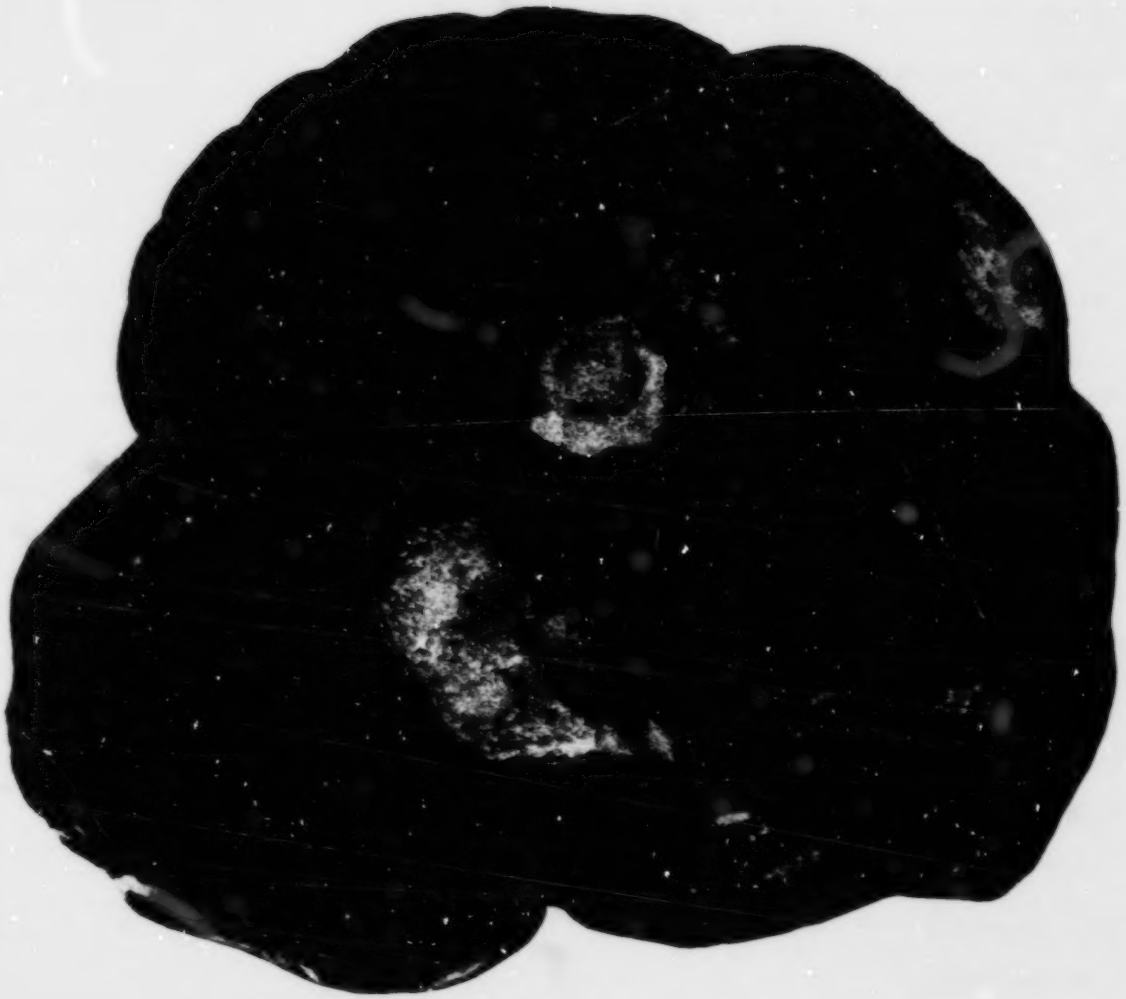
Often, the reason for the war theory being raised is the notion that the arrowheads from the site are "war points" because they are large enough to kill a person as opposed to a rabbit or a bird. In fact, very small projectile points are commonly found in the skeletons of bison and it is clear that they were used to kill the animals. Points of this size found by collectors are often called "bird points". However, there is little doubt that the size of an arrowhead made no difference in the use to which it was put. Rather, the skill of the hunter in hitting a vital spot and the force of the shot were the main factors in killing an animal. There is no reason to define forms of projectile points used in the Neepawa area as "war points" or "bird points".

Pemmican and Tuckahoe

When clearing land for cultivation, farmers occasionally find in the midst of the roots of poplar and willow trees a large fungus called

Tuckahoe Fungus. Frequently mistaken for pemmican, this fungus is found in the roots of poplar and willow trees. Note the wrinkling of the dry specimen. Often the impressions of roots are seen on the tuckahoe exterior, and stones and pebbles are found partially grown over by the fungus. This example is 21 cm. wide. The accompanying drawing of real pemmican, sewn in a leather bundle, illustrates the difference between it and tuckahoe.

"tuckahoe". Often this fungus is mistaken for Indian pemmican, a mixture of pounded meat, grease and berries that was sewn into leather bags for preservation and storage. Although it will keep for a considerable time and was sometimes cached for the following season, it is hardly possible that any food product will last 100 years or more in the alternating moist and dry upland soils of Manitoba. Few if any of the pieces of "pemmican" found in



collections or museums are the real thing; rather, they will certainly be pieces of tuckahoe. The adjacent pictures show the difference between pemmican and tuckahoe.

Was My Land Occupied in Prehistoric Times?

Although many of the residents of the Neepawa area are aware of archaeological sites being on their land, most only know of sites being found elsewhere. Often, after walking a field, we would show the person who gave us permission to inspect his land the results of our efforts. Much of what we might have found was usually waste flakes and debris from the making of stone tools, rather than the actual tools themselves. Such refuse is largely unrecognizable as artifacts to the untrained eye. However, it was usually a pleasant and interesting surprise for the landowner to find out he had an archaeological site on his land. It is likely that most quarter-sections in the Neepawa area have some early material scattered over a knoll or beside a slough, and it is certain that prehistoric hunters have traversed each section of the area at some time or other in the distant past. It should be noted that any site, no matter where found or how small, may prove to be important in answering some question concerning the use made of the area by prehistoric Native peoples.

NATURAL HISTORY

DEGLACIATION AND LAKE AGASSIZ

Until about 12,000 years ago, all of Manitoba was locked in the grip of a massive ice cap. A warming trend that had begun a few thousand years before, and which was a world-wide event, finally caused its melting, or "recession", and saw the emergence of Southern Manitoba from beneath the glacier. By 11,000 years ago, the Neepawa area was ice-free, its terrain shaped and altered by the pressures and movements of the ice sheet. Meltwater from the receding ice formed glacial lakes in the low areas adjacent to the ice front.

The largest glacial lake in the area, Lake Agassiz, began to form in Minnesota and North Dakota after the glacier started its final retreat northward about 15,000 years ago.

Beach ridges that mark former shorelines of this ancient inland sea can still be seen on the Manitoba landscape as long continuous ridges of sand and gravel. The Arden Ridge just to the east of Neepawa marks the Campbell level of Lake Agassiz and, as will be discussed later, forms an important part of the study of Early Man's activities in the Neepawa area.

TOPOGRAPHY, SOILS AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENTS

The topography and soils of the Neepawa area show a wide range of variation. Glacial and pre-glacial events have molded much of the area into its present form.

The Manitoba Escarpment is a semi-continuous ridge running northwest to southeast across the southwestern corner of the province. The local expression of this cliff, the "Riding Mountain Escarpment", is found in the northwestern portion of the District and forms the highest elevation of land in the area. The steep slopes of the Escarpment are composed of loose,

easily-eroded bedrock shale and shaley drift. The Escarpment forms a sharp break between the upland area above the highest Lake Agassiz beach ridges and the lowlands and subescarpment areas to the east. Through the Escarpment area, well-defined stream channels are found with steep gradients. The most visible water system in the study area is the Whitemud River (locally known as Boggy Creek to the south of Neepawa, where it cuts through sandy lake deposits). Glacial till occurs in the northern and western portions of the study area.

To the south of the Riding Mountain Escarpment, rocky soils form the eastern-most part of the Minnedosa-Reston Upland Till Plain. In the southern section of the study area, part of the Upper Assiniboine Delta, or Upland Sand Plain, predominates. This is an area of highly permeable fine to coarse sand and gravel. The diverse local topography, soils and vegetation cover resulting from these variations can prove to be important in the archaeological record. For example, the terraces and valleys of the Riding Mountain Escarpment may have been favourite hunting grounds where bison, elk, and moose could find protection from the rigors of winter when the adjacent countryside was exposed grassland. The Minnedosa-Reston Till Plain and the glacial deposits east of the Riding Mountain Escarpment provide a wealth of stone resources for making tools. The Upper Assiniboine Delta, on the other hand, is virtually rock-free, and any cobbles found in that area must have been brought in from the outside by man.

The Whitemud River Valley, with its offer of protection from winter winds and its diverse local resources of hardwoods and riverine life, may also prove to have been an important local environment to prehistoric man. Much of the site inventory obtained in 1982 was found in, or on the edges of, this

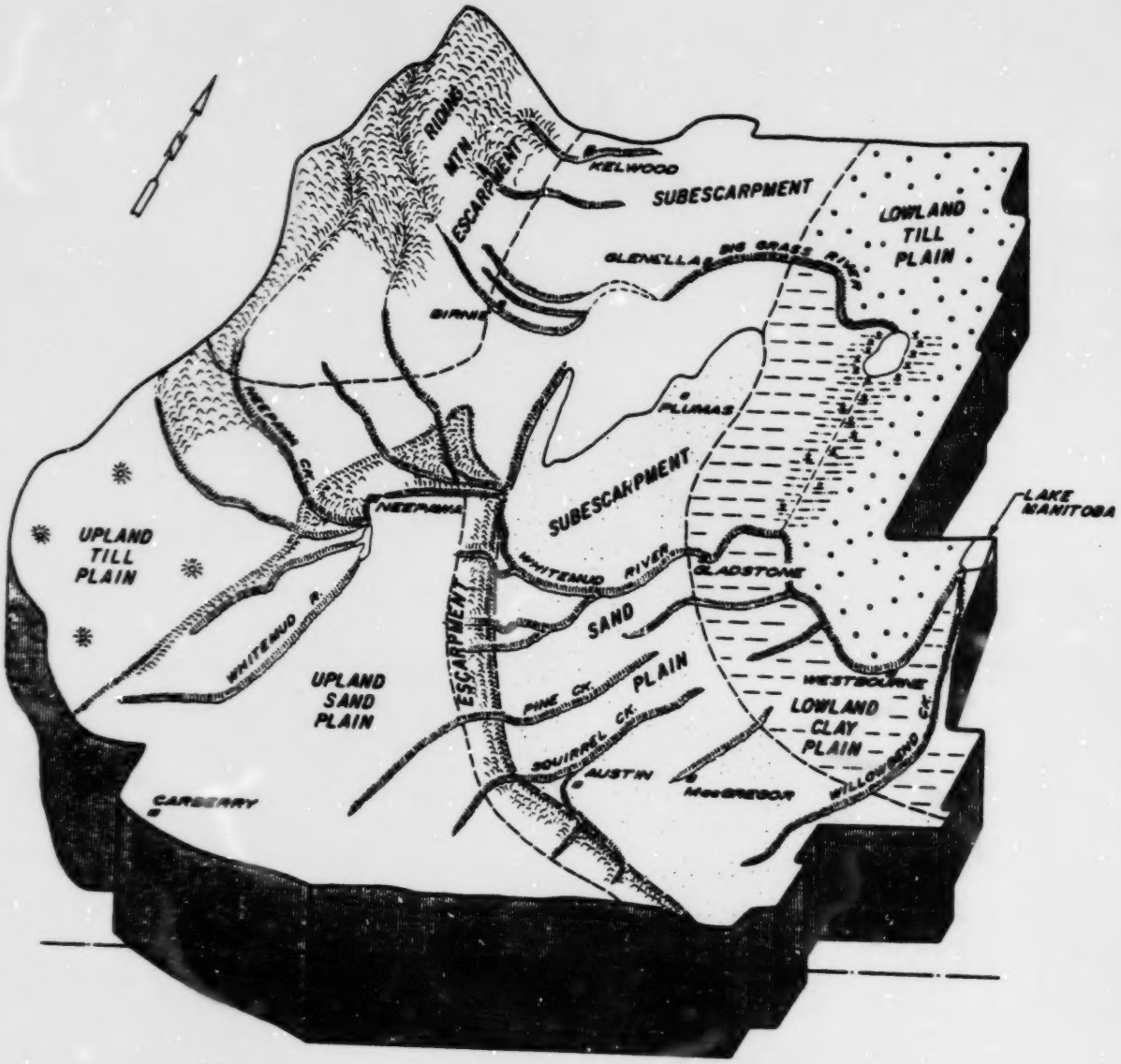
valley. Further intensive studies in each one of these above-mentioned environments will be necessary if it is to be demonstrated that local situations are important in the prehistory of the Neepawa area.

CLIMATE, VEGETATION, FAUNA, AND MAN

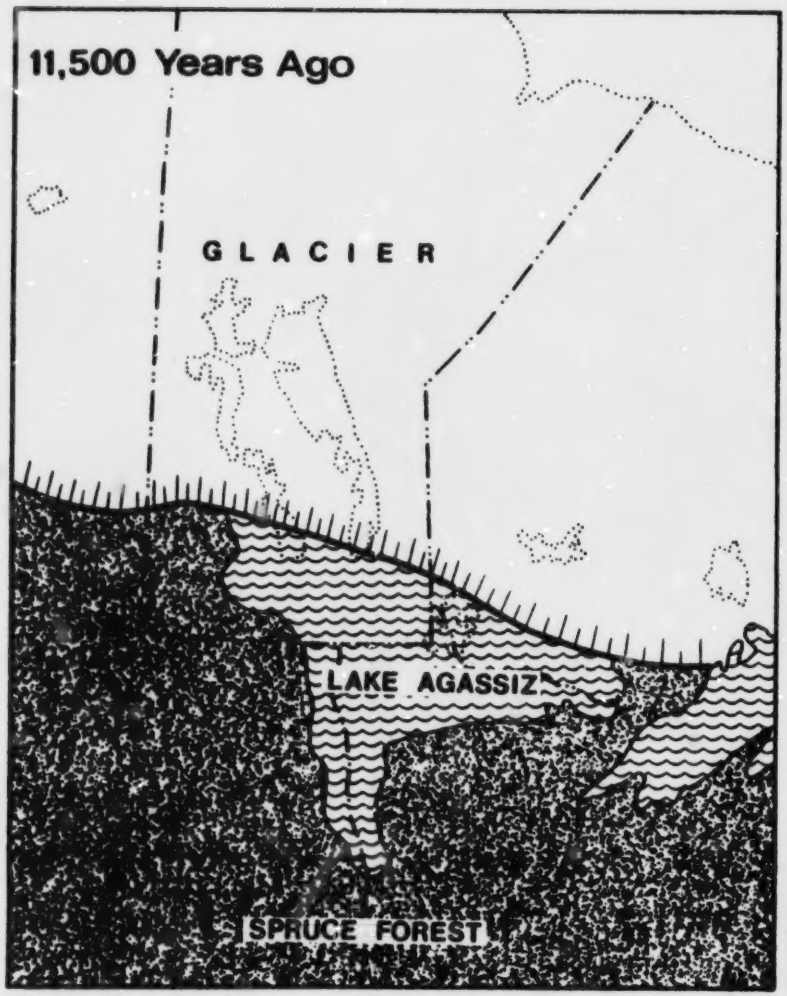
All of the above factors are highly inter-related, and when studying any one of them it is necessary to take the others into account. A major and sustained rise or fall in the average temperature of an area can cause great alterations in the kinds of plants that will grow there. In turn, the animals that favour a certain kind of environment must adjust to the new conditions or move out. All of these factors related to changing conditions, in turn, affect man's use of that area and the way he gains a living from it.

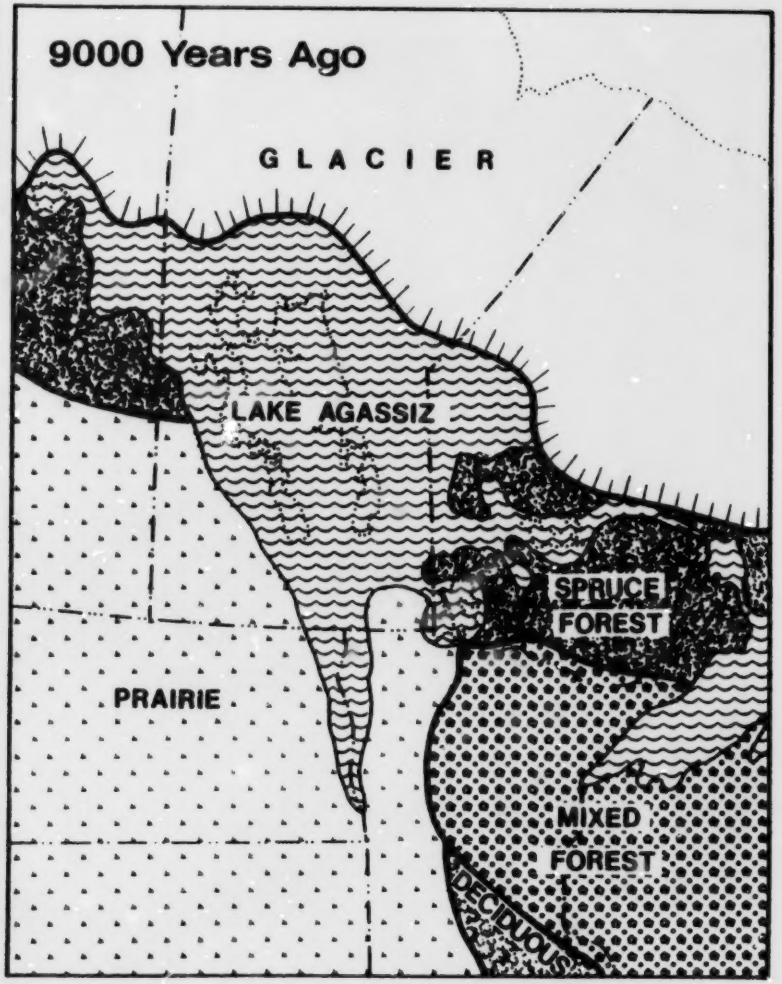
There has been a series of major climatic changes in the Neepawa area over the past 12,000 years. Each one caused shifts in vegetation and animal populations, relating directly to man's use of the area. The first, in fact, allowed man to enter and use Manitoba as a hunting ground.

As was outlined above in the section on glacial history, Manitoba was covered with a thick mantle of ice until about 12,000 years ago, denying use of the province by animals and man. The major world-wide warming trend that caused the glacier to recede from Southern Manitoba ultimately permitted the opening up of the area to immigrant plant and animal communities. Although temperatures were now warmer, the nearby glacier would undoubtedly have affected the climate of this newly-opened land. The forest that developed and covered this ice-free area was in some respects similar, but not identical, to the present-day "taiga" of Northern Manitoba — a forest of a cool or cold climate. The animals which were attracted to this forest and which could make their living in it were most probably few in number and not the preferred prey

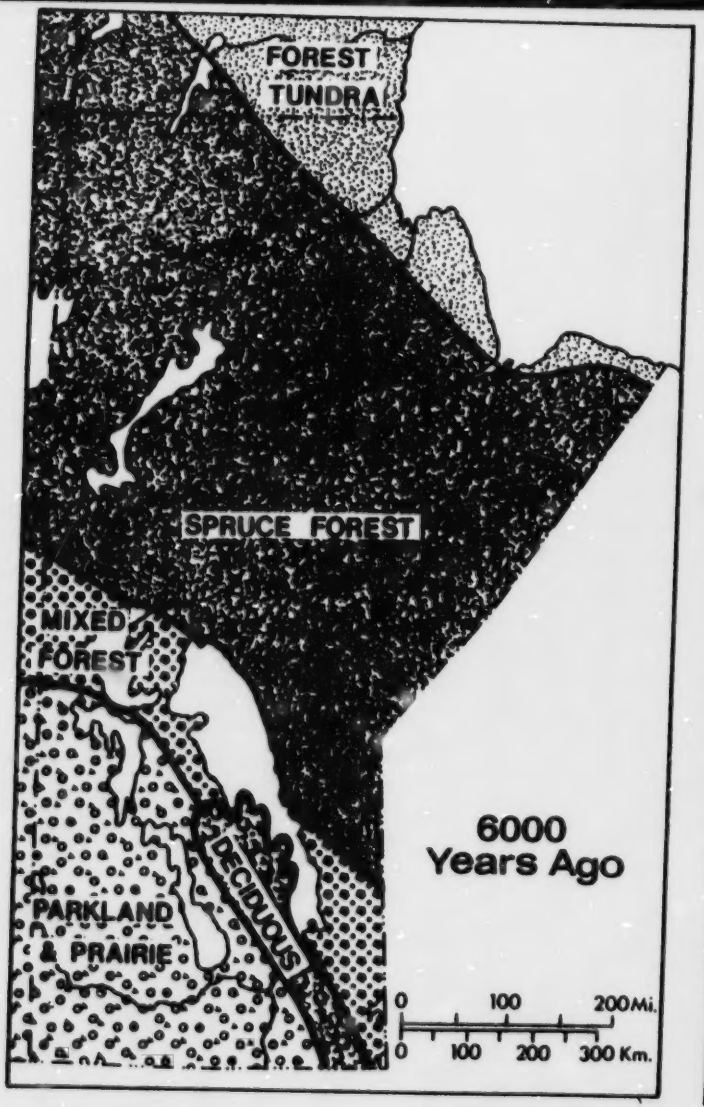


A stylized "birds-eye" view of the Neepawa area and surrounding region, showing the major physiographic areas that make it up: the Riding Mountain Escarpment, Subescarpment, Subescarpment Sand Plain (Lower Assiniboine Delta), Upland Sand Plain (Upper Assiniboine Delta), Upland and Lowland Till Plains, and Lowland Clay Plain.





The diagrams on this and the following page depict three things -- the retreat of the last ice sheet, the development of Lake Agassiz, and the evolution of Manitoba's vegetation zones between 9500 and 1000 B.C. It can truly be said that Manitoba 's natural history witnessed some dramatic changes over the past 12,000 years.


FOREST TUNDRA
SPRUCE FOREST
MIXED FOREST
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PARKLAND & PRAIRIE
6000 Years Ago
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FOREST TUNDRA
SPRUCE FOREST
MIXED FOREST
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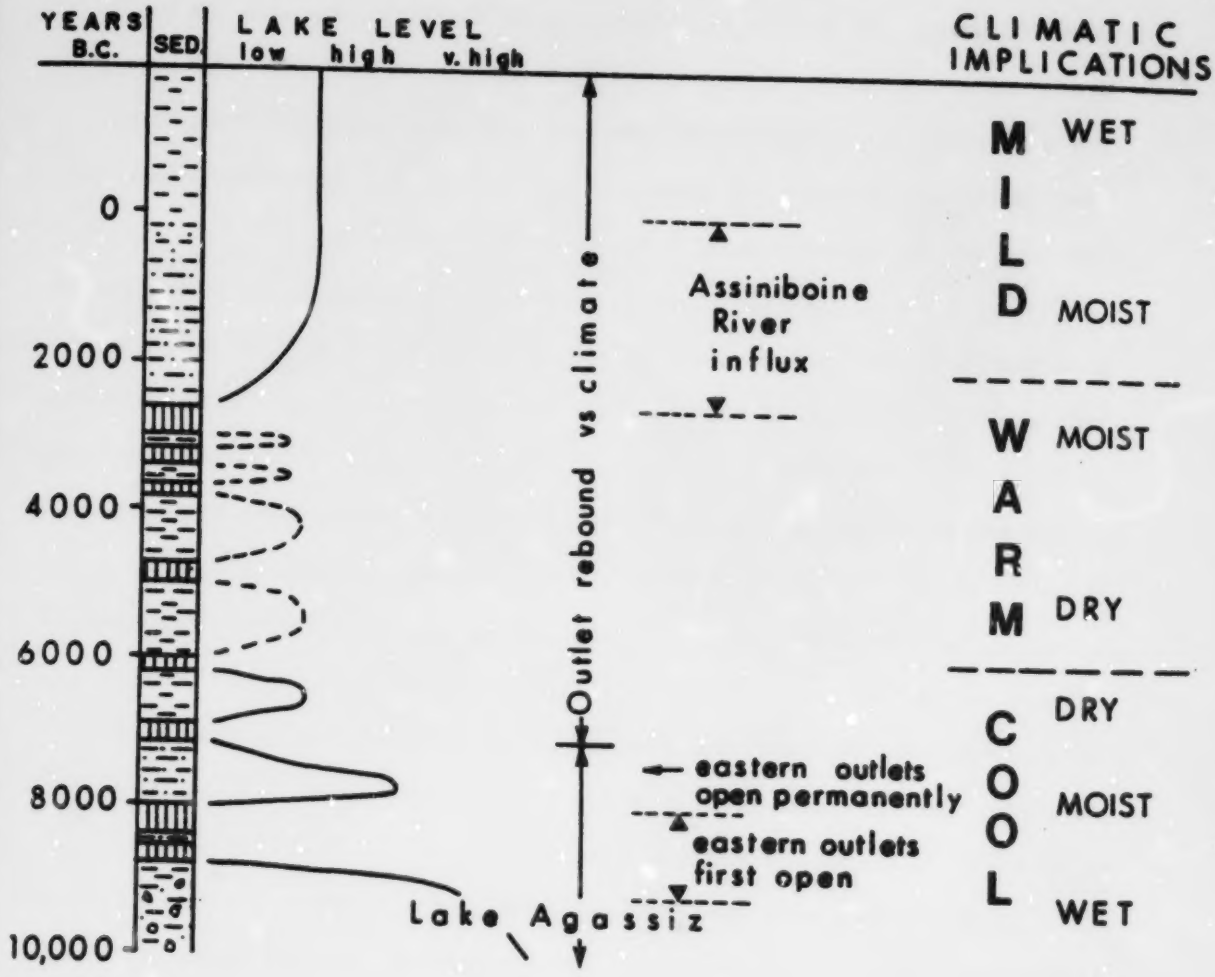
of those people who were available to inhabit the region. As a result, only small groups of men might have hunted the area, and even they would likely have preferred other more suitable environments in which to secure their living.

As the climate continued to moderate and the glaciers receded northward, conditions more similar to those of today began to evolve. Grassland of the sort now found only well to the south of the Neepawa area shifted northward. A long, almost continuous drought that lasted from 4500 BC to 3000 BC and called the "Altithermal" (High Heat) caused grassland conditions to spread into, and northward beyond, the Neepawa area. Further south, once-productive grassland areas were transformed into near-desert by the drought.

About 3000 BC, a cooler, wetter, climate began to establish itself. The Grassland retreated southward and the landscape reverted to forest once more. From that time to the present, a number of short-term droughts have interrupted what has generally been a relatively cool, moist period. These droughts are represented geologically by a series of ancient soils buried in dune sand south of Brookdale. Each of the soils represents the land surface as it existed just before the drought. They have been radiocarbon-dated at 1730 BC, 200 BC, 440 AD, 1030 AD, and 1520 AD, indicating that there have been at least five droughts (six counting the Dirty Thirties) since 2000 BC; however, conditions similar to those of today have prevailed in the Neepawa area for the last 2000 years.

Presently, Southern Manitoba has three major vegetation zones -- the prairies, or Grasslands, in the south and the Boreal Forest to the north, with an intermediate fringe of Aspen Parkland occurring in between. Within the



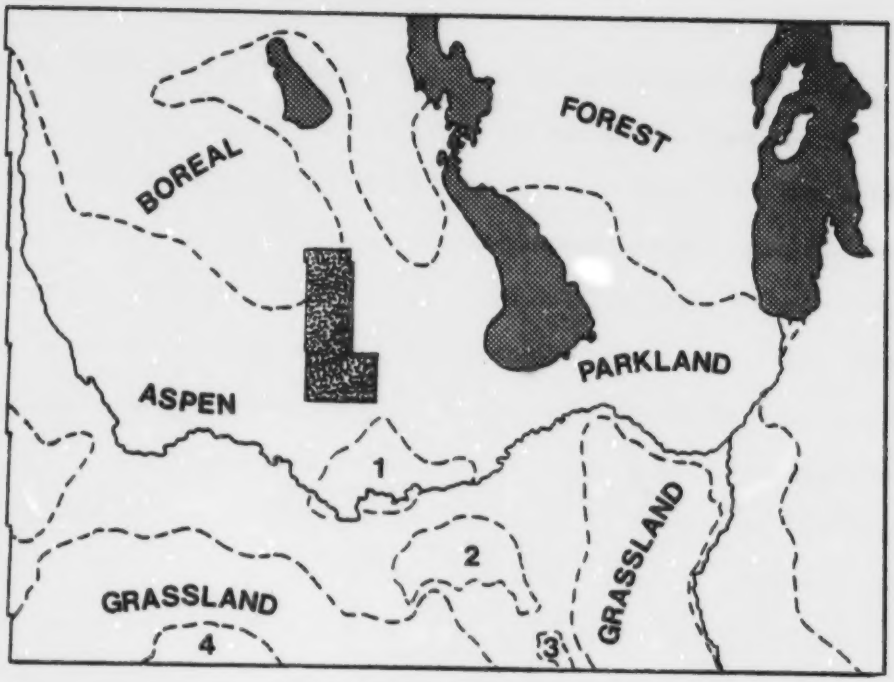
This diagram shows the sequence of environmental change in Southern Manitoba, and is divided into five parts: (1) a time scale, expressed as years B.C.; (2) geological stratigraphy of the bed of Lake Manitoba (note especially the sections with vertical lines, which represent intervals when the late bottom was virtually dry); (3) lake level, initially of Lake Agassiz and, subsequently, its successor, Lake Manitoba (note that the lake level fluctuated considerably from about 8,400 to about 2300 B.C.; much of this period coincides with the "Altithermal", hence the frequent drying up of the lake. The phrases "eastern outlets first open" and "eastern outlets open permanently" refer to the opening and closing of the major drainage channels of Lake Agassiz that were largely responsible for the fluctuation of that lake's levels and, ultimately, its final drainage); (4) the phrase "Assiniboine River influx" refers to a period when the river actually flowed into Lake Manitoba, rather than into the Red River as it does today); (5) climatic implications derived from studies of Lake Manitoba sediments.

last 100 years, the southward progression of the Parklands into former Grassland areas can be accounted for by man's modern land-use practices. Grass fires, which formerly kept the Parklands from edging southward, have been contained because of farming activities, allowing poplar and aspen to grow where they formerly would have been destroyed.

The Parklands also support two other plant communities which would have been important to man. The deciduous forests of the river valleys, which include hardwoods such as maple and green and black ash, were likely important to man in providing wood for tools, shelter and fuel in the winter. Marshes, with their abundance of waterfowl and edible plant foods, were certainly of value to the early residents of Manitoba at certain times of the year.

The importance of the inter-relationship between plant communities, animals and man is best illustrated by the seasonal round of the bison. In this regard, the Neepawa area, because of its location within the Aspen Parkland, has shown itself to be a significant contributor to the archaeological record in Southern Manitoba.

The bison herds used both the Grassland and the Parkland during their yearly migration. In summer, large herds congregated on the Grassland to the south and west of the Neepawa area, growing fat on the abundant prairie grasses. In the fall the herds would migrate northwards to avail themselves of the protection and food resources offered by the Parkland, and to escape the severely cold winds of the prairie winter. They would calve in the Parkland in early spring and then migrate back onto the Grassland to complete the annual cycle. Man's yearly round followed the movements of these herds and was directly related to their migrations. Thus it is likely that many of the archaeological sites found in the Parkland of the Neepawa area were laid



The major portion of Southern Manitoba, showing the principal vegetation zones and their distribution in relation to the Neepawa and Area Planning District. The numbered areas are as follows: (1) Boreal (mixed woods) Forest; (2, 3, 4) Boreal (mixed woods) Forest and Aspen Parkland. It is important to realize that this diagram was originally prepared in the 1930s, and it does not necessarily represent former conditions over, say, the past 2000 years. There is reason to believe that the Grassland-Parkland "boundary" in particular fluctuated considerably during this period, and we cannot say with any degree of confidence just where it was at any given point in time -- a vexing problem for the archaeologist as we shall see in later sections of this book.

down during the winter. During the Altithermal Period, of course, and perhaps during the lesser droughts that have occurred since then, grassland characterized most of the District. Otherwise, the previously outlined yearly sequence of events is likely an accurate one relative to our area.

It is not difficult to imagine how a drought or a rapid warming or cooling of the environment can affect an area. One only has to look back to the 1930s and the disastrous effects that drought brought to the economy of southwestern Manitoba and Saskatchewan to realize how important the interplay of climate and vegetation is to man. Major changes in climate caused by droughts, resulting in large prairie fires and alteration of the environment, would also have affected the way in which prehistoric man made his living in this and adjacent areas. It is imperative that we consider all of these elements when we attempt to reconstruct the archaeological record of the Neepawa District.

We now come to the point where we can introduce the evidence of man's entry into Manitoba. The story is an interesting one that has yet to be completely told. Our evidence of man's use of the area is still fragmentary, and more work on this fascinating topic needs to be done if we are to fully understand its complexity. In the meantime, let us review the story as it is known thus far.

EARLY PREHISTORIC PERIOD

THE ARRIVAL OF MAN IN MANITOBA AND THE EARLY PREHISTORIC PERIOD

The journey that led to man's arrival in Manitoba probably took place during the last major phase of the Ice Age, when the first residents of North America crossed over from Asia to Alaska. No one knows exactly when these first peoples arrived, nor is it certain why they came. They were no doubt unaware that they had discovered a new continent on their journey.

Recent discoveries in the Yukon indicate that man occupied that area as early as 27,000 years ago, while some archaeologists believe that man has been on this continent for upwards of 40,000 years or more. Between 18,000 and 16,000 B.C., massive sheets of glacial ice covered all of Manitoba and extended into the northern United States. Although Manitoba was then an uninhabitable icy wasteland, the glacier that covered the province at that time still forms part of the story of how these first North Americans made their journey of discovery. The ice sheets that ground their way across northern North America were made up of the snows and rains of many thousands of years, trapped as ice, because of the cold environment. Since the ice could not melt, this water that normally returned to replenish the oceans stayed on the land and the levels of the oceans dropped. As a result, the shallow seas between Asia and Alaska were lowered enough to open up a corridor of dry land. It was across this corridor, the Bering Strait "land bridge", that the newcomers migrated into North America.

This water-free land mass was large and it is likely that the families crossed slowly, hunting and gathering food along the way, reaching North America after a considerable time. Movements were not necessarily one-way, and in all probability these early peoples continuously wandered back and forth over the "bridge".

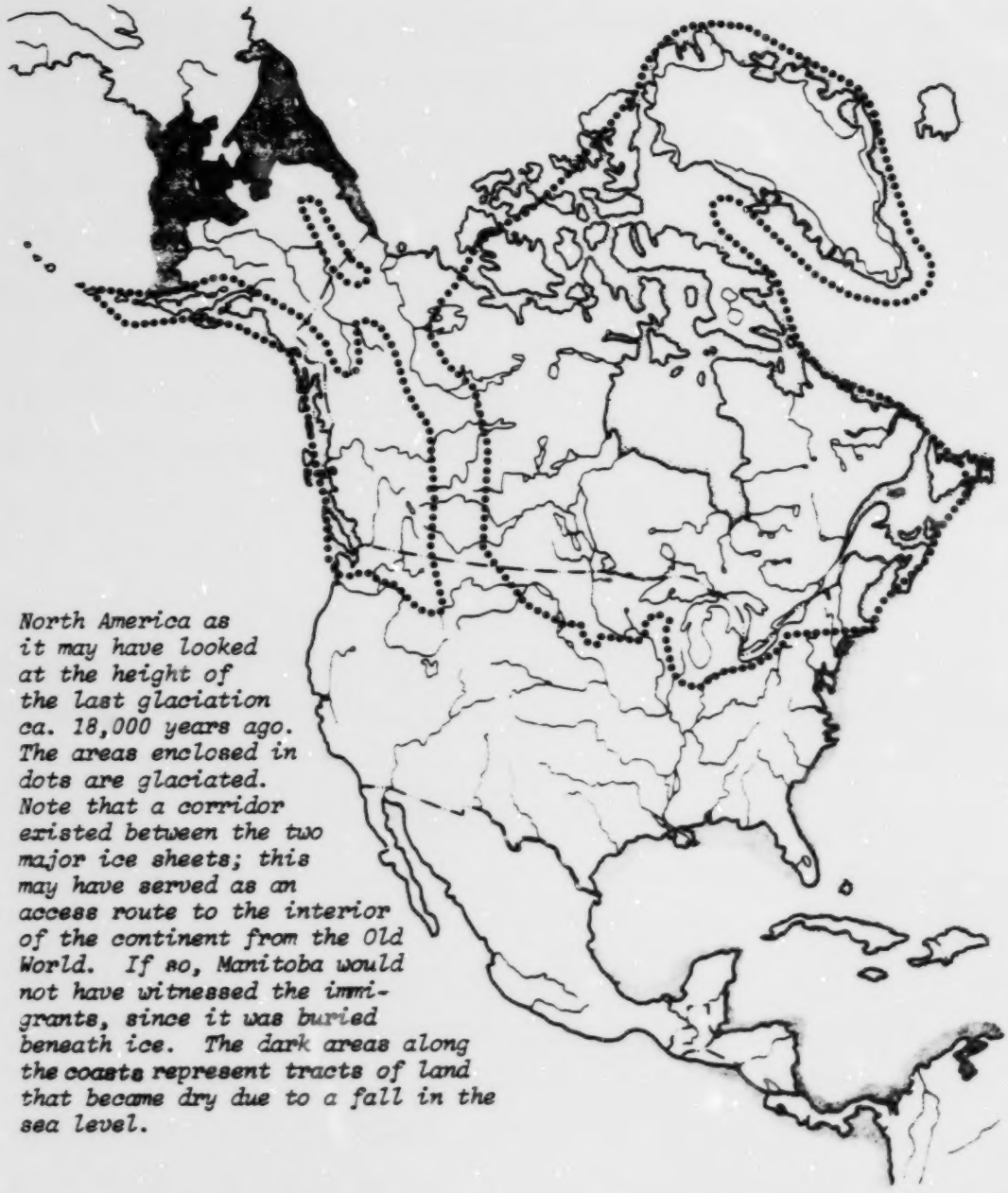
Although much of northern North America was covered with glaciers, there were some ice-free corridors that allowed the people to travel south into the Central Plains region of North America. It was here that they adjusted to their new environment and developed a culture oriented to this new land. The stage was set for man's entry into what is now Manitoba.

While the ancestors of the first Manitobans were hunting and gathering on the American Plains, the continental ice sheet to the north was melting around the edges and slowly receding. Southern Manitoba was becoming free of ice; forests were beginning to grow on the debris left by the retreating glacier, and meltwater was forming a great inland lake — Glacial Lake Agassiz. The northern limit of this lake was bounded by the retreating ice sheet itself, while its western shores followed the base of the Manitoba Escarpment which, of course, included the Neepawa area. It was to this scene and to this environment that the first residents of the Neepawa area came some 12,000 years ago.

THE CLOVIS CULTURE: 10,000 - 9000 BC

The "Clovis Culture" is named after a site near the town of Clovis, New Mexico. It was there that the distinctive type of spear points used by these ancient people was first excavated archaeologically.

The Clovis people were nomadic hunters and gatherers, and evidence of their presence is found across the southern Prairie Provinces and on into the United States as far as Texas and New Mexico. The basis of their diet was mammoth, giant bison and other types of now-extinct Ice Age "megafauna" (large animals). The most common method of hunting these big game animals involved the use of a spear, and it is for this reason that we closely associate a particular type of spear point with this culture.

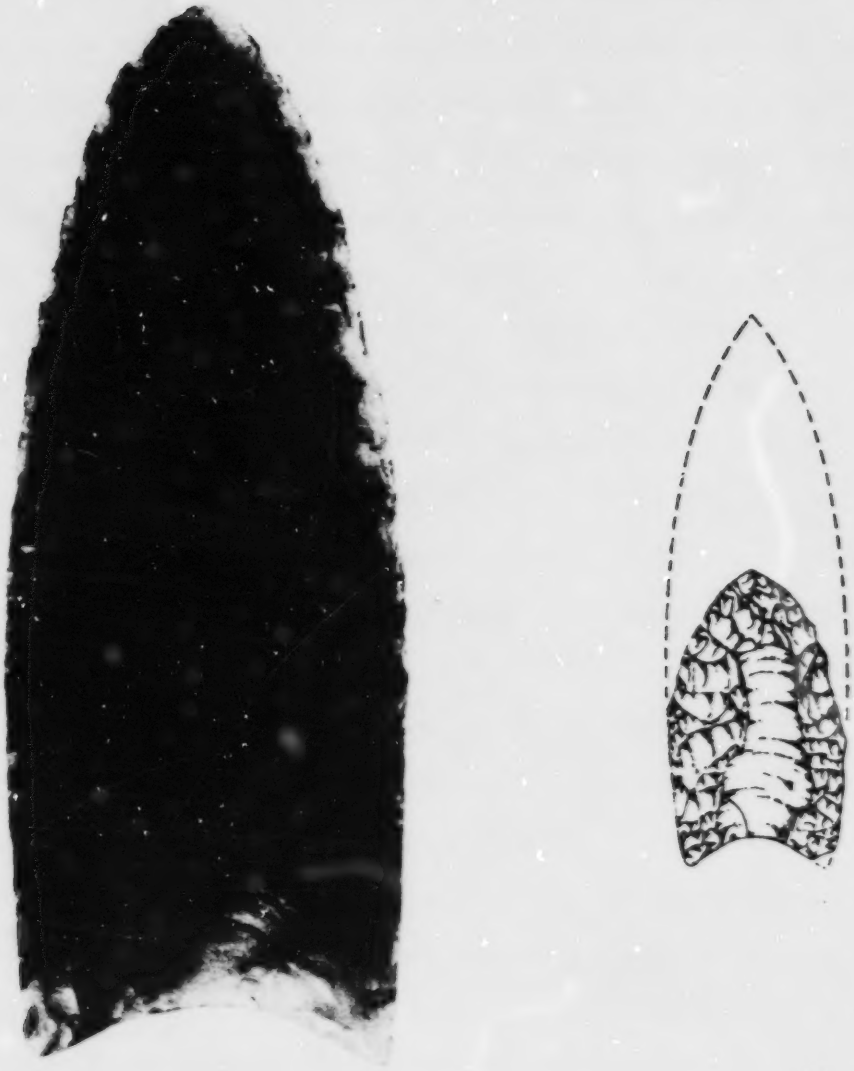


North America as it may have looked at the height of the last glaciation ca. 18,000 years ago. The areas enclosed in dots are glaciated. Note that a corridor existed between the two major ice sheets; this may have served as an access route to the interior of the continent from the Old World. If so, Manitoba would not have witnessed the immigrants, since it was buried beneath ice. The dark areas along the coasts represent tracts of land that became dry due to a fall in the sea level.

We know very little of the Clovis people from information gathered in Manitoba. All that has been found so far is half-a-dozen or so of the characteristic spear points that they made, and all of these have been recovered from surface sites. No bones, tools, or campsites that can be definitely associated with these people have as yet been identified in the province. Therefore, the information we have on the Clovis presence in Manitoba is minimal, and in order to grasp the available details of their lifeway, we must rely for the most part on information gathered to the south.

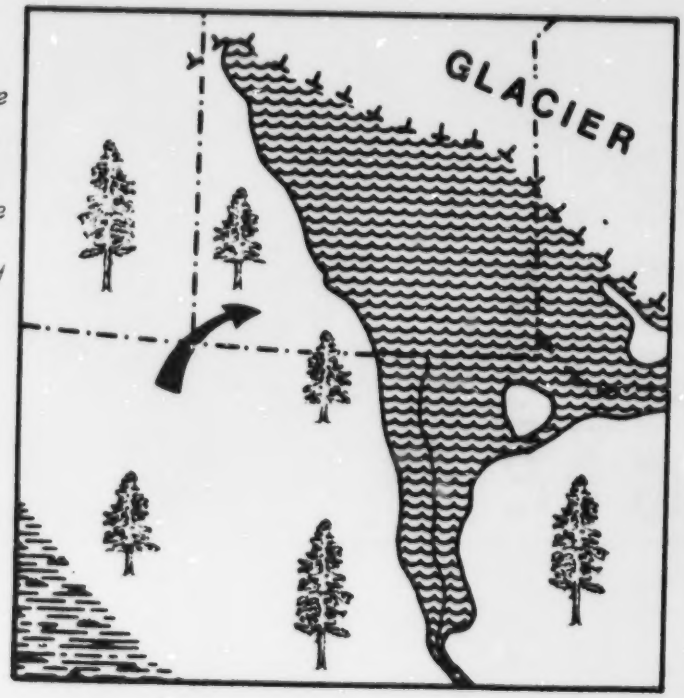
Two of the few known Clovis spear points from Manitoba have been found in or near the Neepawa and Area Planning District. One came to light near Mentmore, while the other was found northeast of Erickson along the Rolling River. Note that both finds come from the uplands west of the Lake Agassiz Basin.

That evidence of the first human penetration into Manitoba is rare is not surprising. The Clovis peoples were free to wander over much of North America in search of game and good hunting grounds. Clearly, Manitoba, only recently released from the grip of the ice sheets and covered throughout Clovis times by a spruce forest, was incapable of attracting the numbers and variety of big game animals that roamed the Plains to the south. Accordingly, our region would have been viewed with less favour than the far more productive areas that could be found elsewhere. It is possible that only few wandering groups of hunters came into the area and they may have left soon after in search of "greener pastures". It must be remembered that the population of North America was probably quite low at this time and the nomadic bands of hunters did not have to confine themselves to areas they considered unsuitable to their way of life. Nevertheless, the first human occupation of Manitoba can be traced to the Clovis Culture.



The spear points pictured above were both made by Clovis hunters. The one on the left comes from the Erickson area and is a superb example of the flint knappers craft. The other smaller specimen, which was discovered in the Mentmore area, was broken one or more times and subsequently re-sharpened. The left specimen is shown approximately twice its natural size; the one on the right is natural size. Both were found west of the Lake Agassiz basin and are some 11,000 to 12,000 years old.

When Clovis people first ventured into Manitoba (arrow), most of the province was uninhabitable because it was either buried under ice or flooded by Lake Agassiz. Even those areas that were ice- and lake-free may not have been particularly attractive, since they were covered by a spruce-dominated boreal-type forest that probably did not support the numbers and variety of big game upon which Clovis Man based his livelihood. Nonetheless, Clovis points do come to light from time to time, and one of those presently on record is from the Neepawa and Area Planning District.

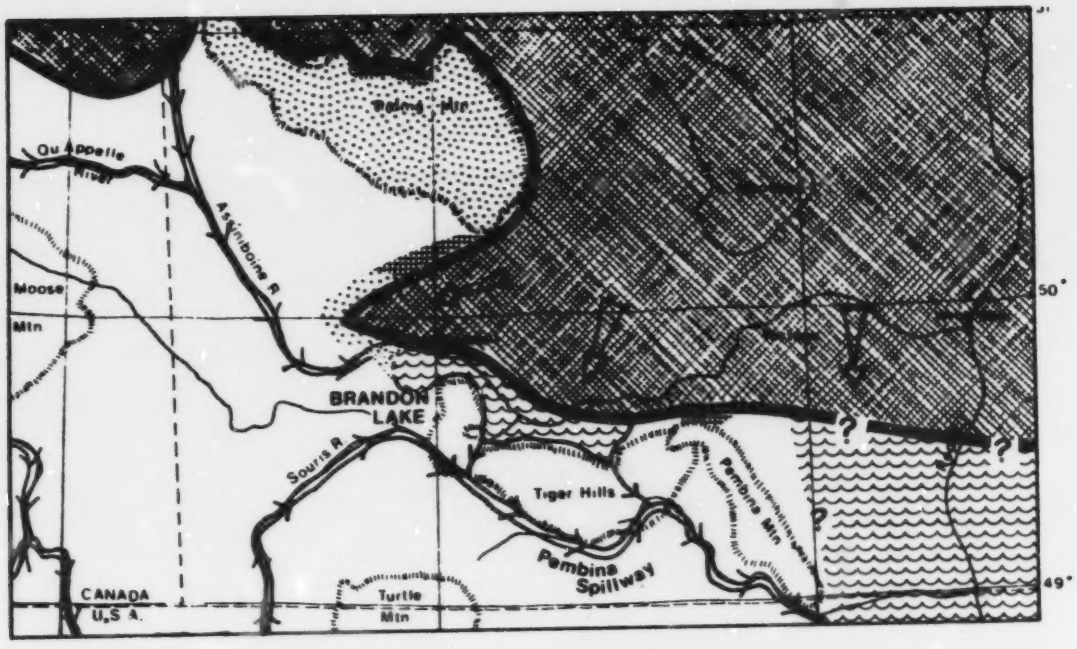


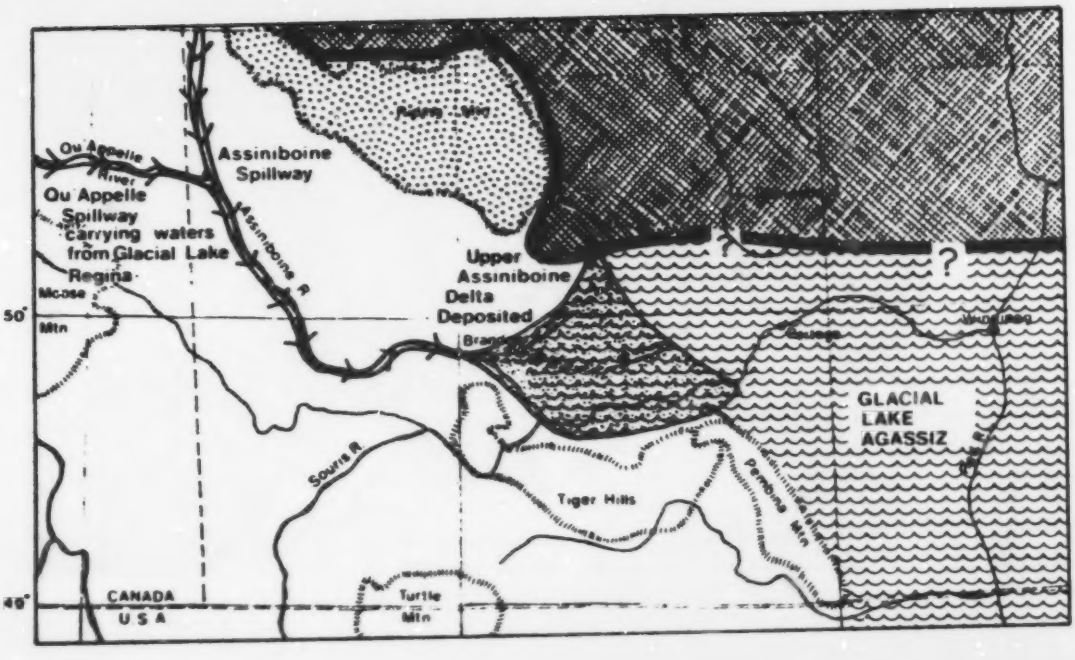
SOUTHWEST MANITOBA

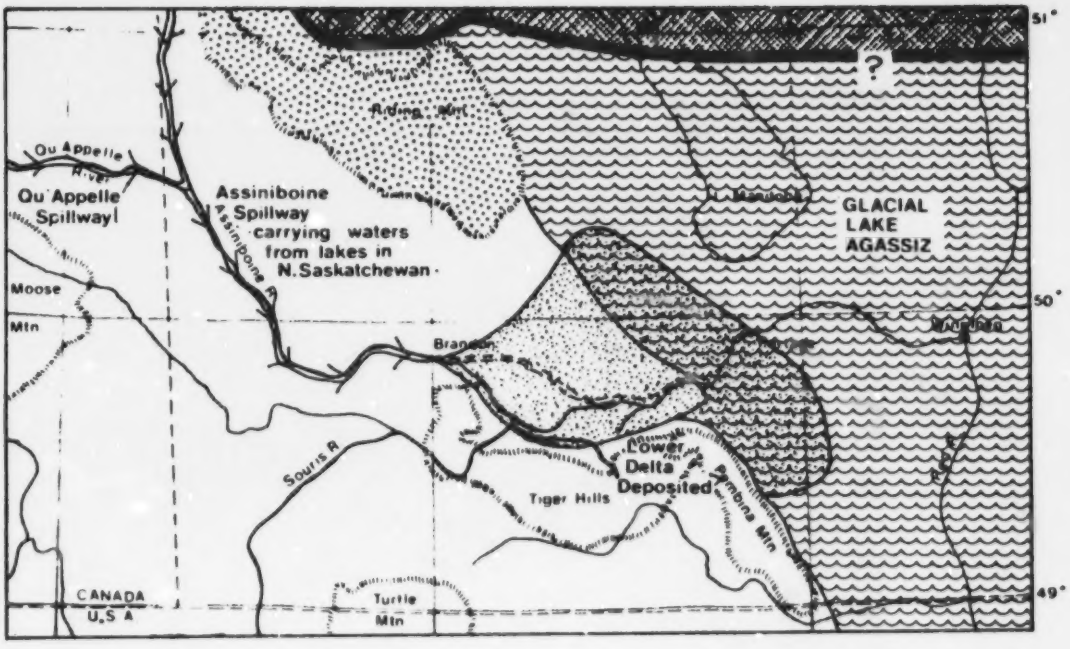
Glacial History and Delta Formation

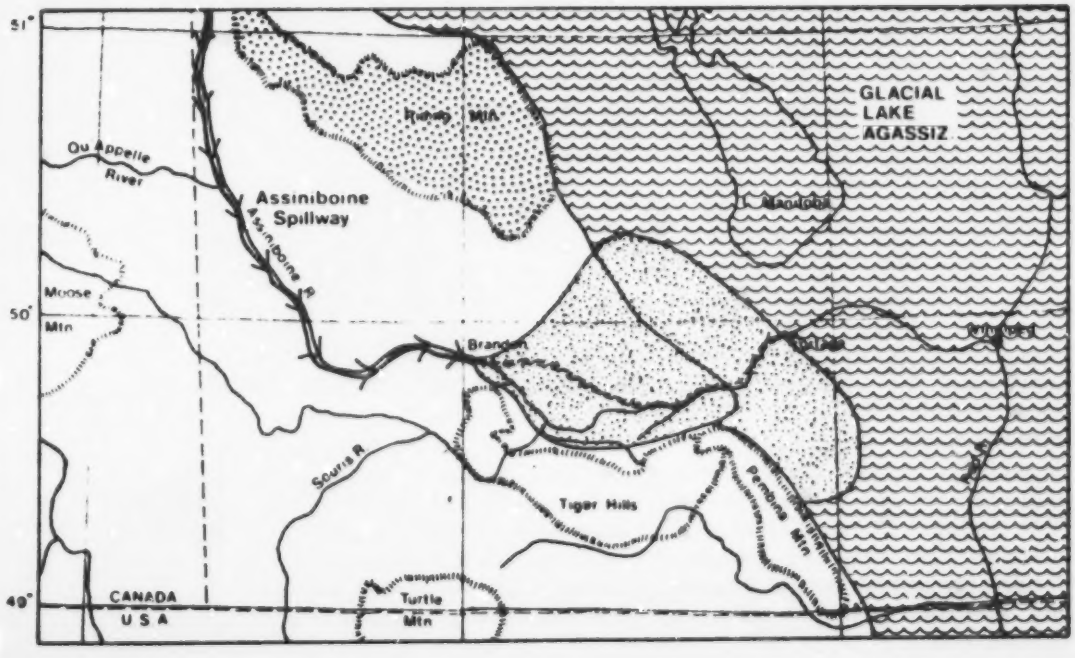
The following six diagrams depict Southern Manitoba as it appeared between 9500 and 9000 B.C. -- most of the Clovis period. Note the marked changes that took place, particularly as regards the relationship between the ice sheet, Lake Agassiz, and what is now the Neepawa and Area Planning District. The key provided above will assist you in reading the maps.

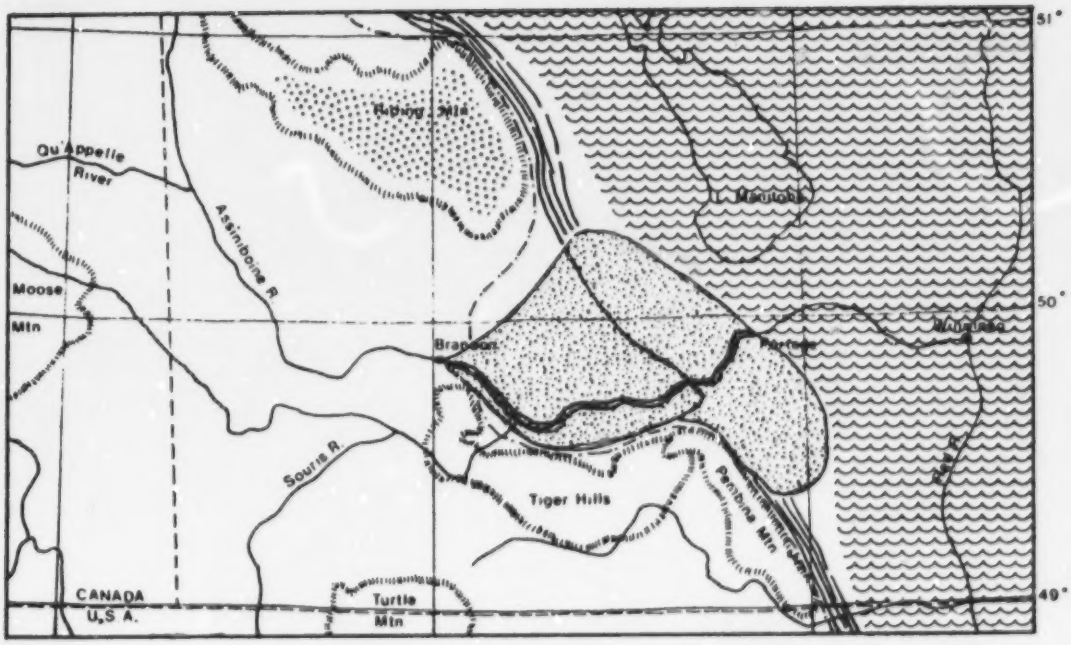
102°
100°
52°
51°
50°
49°
Moose
Mtn
GLACIAL
LAKE
SOURIS
CANADA
U.S.A.
Turtle
Mtn


Ou Appelle River
Assiniboine R.
Moose Mtn
BRANDON LAKE
Souris R.
Tiger Hills
Pembina Mtn
Pembina Spillway
CANADA
U.S.A.
Turtle Mtn
50°
49°


Ou Appelle River
Assiniboine Spillway
Ou Appelle Spillway carrying waters from Glacial Lake Regina
Assiniboine R.
Moose Mtn
Upper Assiniboine Delta Deposited
GLACIAL LAKE AGASSIZ
Souris R.
Tiger Hills
Pembina Mtn
CANADA
USA
Turtle Mtn
50°
49°


51°
?
Riding Mtn
Ou Appelle River
Ou Appelle Spillway
Assiniboine Spillway carrying waters from lakes in N.Saskatchewan
Assiniboine R
Moose Mtn
Brandon
GLACIAL LAKE AGASSIZ
50°
Souris R
Lower Delta Deposited
Tiger Hills
Pembina Mtn
CANADA
U.S.A
Turtle Mtn
49°


51°
Riding Mtn
GLACIAL LAKE AGASSIZ
Ou Appelle River
Assiniboine Spillway
Assiniboine R
Moose Mtn
50°
Brandon
Souris R
Tiger Hills
Pembina Mtn
CANADA
U.S.A
Turtle Mtn
49°



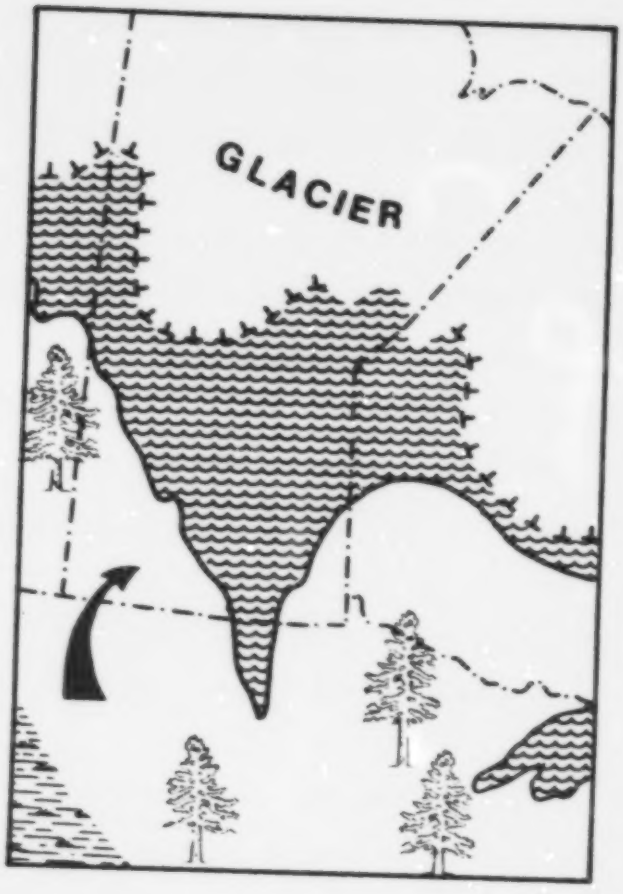
When man first arrived in the Neepawa area he was prevented from travelling further eastward by a great freshwater lake -- Glacial Lake Agassiz -- which covered what is now much of Southern Manitoba. Formed by the meltwater from the receding continental glacier, it was a barrier to further settlement until late Palaeo-Indian times. The lowering of the lake allowed for the settlement of the lowlands of the Gladstone and Portage plains. Today's Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba are but remnants of this once-great inland sea.

Man's pursuit of food during the Palaeo-Indian period was land-based and bison was his main prey. No doubt, while standing on the Campbell beach ridge, he wondered who and what might be found on the other, invisible shore, of the lake. His distant cousins on that far shore likely thought the same thing.

THE LINDENMEIER CULTURE: 9000 - 8000 BC

The next people to utilize Manitoba as hunting territory are referred to as "Lindenmeier", named after the landowner of a major site in Colorado. The Lindenmeier artifact inventory is distinguished by "Folsom" and "Midland" points, which derive their names from sites in New Mexico and Texas. Like their Clovis predecessors, the Lindenmeier people were largely grassland-oriented big game hunters who roamed the Great Plains to the south and west of Manitoba. However, rather than hunting mammoth, their main prey was a now-extinct giant bison, an ancient cousin to the modern bison. The material culture that they possessed and the way they obtained food were also quite different from those employed by the Clovis people: the points used to hunt the bison were generally smaller, better made and more refined than Clovis points. The Lindenmeier people also developed and used the "atlatl", or spear-thrower, to propel the weapons into their quarry. The atlatl may be thought of as an extension of the hunter's arm, increasing the arc of his throw and adding strength to it, thereby permitting the projectile to be hurled with greater velocity than was possible with the human arm alone. Thus the dart, thrown with the atlatl, would travel faster and would have more penetrating power than a hand-thrown spear. One researcher has likened it to a baseball pitcher having arms down to his knees!

In addition to technological innovations, the Lindenmeier hunters also developed new hunting techniques. Herds of bison were stampeded and driven into ravines to their deaths. This form of hunting requires a high degree of organization and knowledge of herd animal behaviour. It also produces, after a successful hunt, a much larger quantity of meat than solitary animals kills.



The Lindenmeier occupation of Manitoba took place at a time (9000-8000 B.C.) when most of the province was covered by ice and glacial meltwater. The "high and dry" areas, including the Neepawa district, were still covered with a spruce-dominated forest, which failed to attract sizeable numbers of bison -- Lindenmeier Man's favoured prey. As a result, the corresponding archaeological evidence is very scarce in this province, and none at all has been recorded in the Neepawa and Area Planning District.

The few Folsom and Midland points found in Manitoba have been surface finds; none have yet been reported from the Neepawa and Area Planning District. As was the case with the Clovis Culture, little is known of how these people made their living here. Most of our information comes to us from the south, a state of affairs that will remain until an excavatable site is found in

Folsom points, like the example shown to the left, have not yet been discovered in the Neepawa and Area Planning District. This is not surprising, for the reasons indicated elsewhere on this page.

Manitoba. However, we do know that until towards the very end of the Lindenmeier period, southwestern Manitoba was still forest-covered, with a now-distant retreating ice front situated well to the north. As for Glacial Lake Agassiz, the Lindenmeier phase coincided with a period of time during which the lake drained to a significant degree due to the retreat of the glacier. As a result, a sizeable tract of landscape, hitherto flooded by the lake became dry and, theoretically, it could have been colonized by plants, animals and man. Around the end of the Lindenmeier Phase the ice readvanced, the outlet of the lake (in Northwestern Ontario) was blocked, the waters once again rose to high levels, and the well-defined Campbell beach was formed. If any human beings were living in the basin at that time, they would have been

forced out by the rising waters. This scenario, of course, is nothing more than educated guesswork, since no Lindenmeier sites have been found in the Lake Agassiz basin. Our knowledge of the Lake's history, however, does give rise to possibilities that may some day be confirmed as archaeological field research goes forward.

The Lindenmeier hunters, like the Clovis people before them, used Manitoba very little, remaining further south in the Grasslands where their preferred prey, the bison, would have been more readily available. Likely, much of the Manitoba evidence relates to the closing decades of the Lindenmeier period, when southwestern Manitoba was changing rapidly from a forest-dominated environment to grassland. This ecological change saw the bison enter the area in large numbers, making the region a much richer hunting territory. Its use by Lindenmeier hunters was cut short, however, by the entry of other bison hunters, who took over the region when it became a grassland.

THE PLANO PERIOD: 8000 - 5000 BC

Considerable debate has taken place as to the origins of the Plano people. Some archaeologists argue that they are late offshoots of existing Lindenmeier groups, while others maintain that their origins are to be found in the high country west of the Rocky Mountains. Whatever their place of origin, by the time they reached Manitoba and the Nesepawa area they were, in all likelihood, full-fledged Plains-oriented bison hunters. "Plano", the term used by archaeologists to designate these people and their culture, is the Spanish word for "plains".

The Plano people came to a Manitoba that had changed significantly over the previous three millenia. The changes in the climate and vegetation

drew the bison into the Neepawa area in larger numbers than ever before. This influx is borne out locally by the discovery in 1918 of bones at a depth of 10 metres in the Campbell Beach at Arden. The Campbell Beach was formed between 8000 and 7500 BC, and therefore equates with the first half of the Plano period. The bison were now the predominant big game animal on the plains of Southern Manitoba. Man was quick to seize the economic advantage that these changes brought about. Southern Manitoba, previously a "have not" area during the early periods of man's presence on the Northern Plains, was now rich in the main natural resource sought after by the Plano people.

A solitary Palaeo-Indian hunter, at the climax of his hunt, prepares to release a stone-tipped dart from his atlatl or spear thrower. Here, all the skills learned from his elders and his practice over many seasons come together for a moment in time and space.

The bison will provide the hunter, his band and his family with food, hides for protection, tools from bones and horn, a container for food from the paunch, and sinews for tying points to dart shafts.

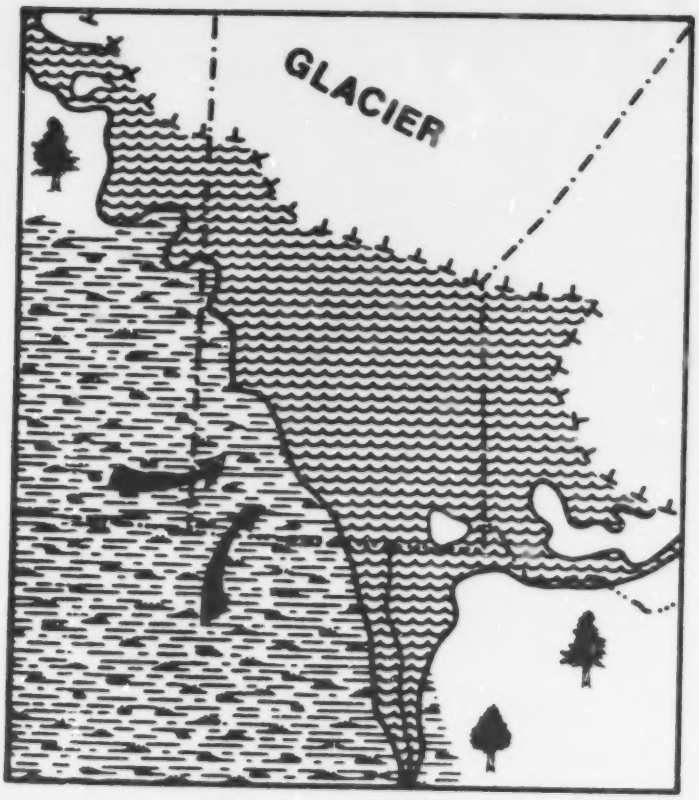
Today the point, some of the bones from the kill, and perhaps a nearby campfire used to cook some of the meat, can provide useful information to the archaeologist about how and when this event occurred. While we will never know all that happened during those ancient times, such clues can add much to our knowledge of the distant past.

While most of the Plano materials so far recovered in Manitoba from this period are surface finds, there are many excavated archaeological sites in the Plains of the United States that have yielded most of what we know of these people. It is generally believed that they were "communal" bison hunters, as were the earlier Lindenmeier people; that is, the hunt was carried out by a co-operating group of individuals with well-defined roles and functions. While certainly not all of their hunting was done communally, the fact that they did some of their hunting this way indicates their ability to periodically organize smaller units into larger groups to the benefit of the whole.

The summers would be spent on the Grasslands hunting the large herds of animals which congregated there during that season. "Jumps" were no doubt employed to kill large numbers of bison. The group would surround a herd (or part of a herd) and stampede them over the steep edge of a gully, injuring and killing as many as possible. The wounded animals would be dispatched with spears and darts and then butchered for hides and meat.

At a Plano site in Colorado, archaeologists have counted 193 animals killed in one such "jump". It is estimated that 60,000 pounds of meat were produced from the butchering activity at this site and that at least 150 people would have been required to carry away even a third of the meat. Clearly, these people had developed a most effective way of hunting game. A measure of its success can be gauged by the fact that basically the same methods were still in use when the Europeans first visited the Plains thousands of years later.

The mud at the edge of a slough or wallow could prove to be a death trap for the bison. Stampeded into the soft ground, these animals could be mired down and become easy prey to hunters armed with darts or spears. Although trapped, the huge animal would still attempt to fight back and escape. It is likely that many hunters were gored, trampled or killed during such encounters with their prey. The hunter would take what was desired or needed from the kill and leave what was not immediately necessary. Prior to the extermination of the bison in the mid- and late 1800s, and possibly during the severest droughts of the "Altithermal" (see below), there would always be another bison available to fulfill his wants and needs.



With the changeover from boreal-type forest to Grassland ca. 8000 B.C., the countryside west of Lake Agassiz was occupied by human beings originating to the south and west. They were the early makers of lanceolate points, who no doubt found southwestern Manitoba, including the Neepawa area, very much to their liking.

During the winter, with the bison migrating off the Plains into the woodlands and the river valleys, other hunting techniques were likely used. Groups of hunters would entrap the animals in creeks and gullies, possibly with the aid of snowdrifts, killing them with spears or darts from their atlatls. Much of this meat, because of the cold temperatures, could be dried and stored for use in the bitterly cold months of mid-winter.

This cycle of activities, with human groups following the bison herds on their seasonal round, continued in Southern Manitoba until the last of the bison herds were destroyed in the mid-1800s.

There are two main groups of Plano projectile points from the Manitoba area that archaeologists use to define the Plano Culture. One group is characterized by narrow leaf-shaped ("lanceolate") points, the other by stemmed points. The former, although generally considered to be somewhat earlier than their stemmed counterparts, likely overlap with them in time. They comprise the "Agate Basin", "Hell Gap", and "Lusk" types. All are finely worked specimens made by delicate pressure flaking, and are ground on the edges to prevent them from cutting the lashings that fixed them to the shafts

This remnant of an Agate Basin point, manufactured from Knife River Flint, was found in the Neepawa and Area Planning District. It was obviously broken and resharpened before it was eventually lost or discarded. It is natural size.

Lanceolate forms of Plano points such as this are found both above and below the Campbell strandline, and it is believed that their makers were in the region both before and after Lake Agassiz receded from the Campbell beach.

This Scottsbluff point, found just to the west of Arden is a type of stemmed Plano point, all of which occur above, that is west of, the Campbell beach ridge of Glacial Lake Agassiz. This example, like all known stemmed Plano points, may have been lost prior to the recession of Lake Agassiz below the Campbell level of the glacial lake. Length of specimen is 11.6 cm.

of darts or spears. The stemmed group consists of "Scottsbluff", "Alberta", and "Eden"* points. These are also well-made and finely flaked; indeed, the Eden points in particular are virtual masterpieces of the stoneworker's craft. Both of these major Plano groups are represented by findings in and around the Neepawa and Area Planning District.

There has been considerable debate as to the age and sequence of occupation by the peoples who made these two groups of points in Manitoba. The majority of the Plano points discovered here are surface finds and are widely distributed across the southern and western parts of the province.

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*NOTE: This point type is named after the Eden Valley of Wyoming, not Eden, Manitoba.

A mid-section of a (broken) Eden point, made of Knife River Flint, found near Arden. Notice the delicate "flake scars" on the surface of the object, which represent the care and skill brought to bear in the manufacture of the artifact. The picture is approximately twice the natural size of the specimen.

Part of the debate over the age and distribution of Plano projectile points and the sequence of occupation they represent, revolves around where they have, and have not, been found. The Campbell Beach (Arden Ridge) of Glacial Lake Agassiz forms a central part of this debate.

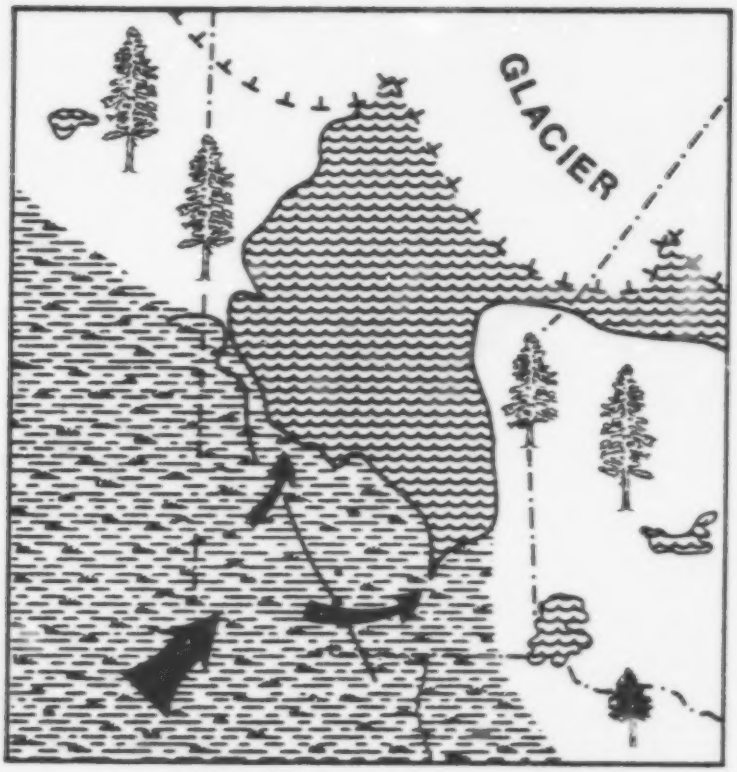
When we plot on a map the areas where all of the Plano projectile points have been found, and superimpose the Campbell Beach ridge on this map, we find that all of the stemmed points are found west of the Glacial Lake Agassiz Basin, as demarcated by the Campbell Beach. The leaf-shaped points are found both west and east of this strandline. The few discoveries made within the planning district to date conform to this general state of affairs.

Obviously, for artifacts to have been deposited below (that is, east of) the beach ridge, there would have had to have been a lowering of the levels of the lake, as people cannot live on or under water. This lowering of water is believed to have occurred late in Plano times beginning around 7500 BC. Therefore, why are the later, stemmed points not found east of the ridge as well? Two explanations have been brought forward. One suggests that the later arrivals, who were making stemmed points, replaced the lanceolate point-makers on the high ground west of the Campbell Beach ridge after the latter moved down onto the newly formed lowlands of the receding Glacial lake. Therefore, the old beach ridge formed a boundary or "frontier" between the two groups. Thus, no stemmed points are found east of the beach ridge because their makers did not venture onto the lowlands which were occupied by makers of lanceolate points.

The second theory may be more acceptable. It maintains that no stemmed points are found east of the Campbell Beach ridge because the stemmed point makers occupied the area while the basin was still full of water and before Lake Agassiz began to drain. Hence, use of the lowlands was impossible

because they were underwater. The makers of stemmed points possibly hunted in the same area as those making lanceolate points, but left the area before the water levels receded. The makers of lanceolate forms remained in the area until the lake level dropped, whereupon they descended onto the newly-drained lowlands.

It is clear that further work will be needed to resolve many of the problems that have been discussed here. Since few of the Plano period artifacts have been scientifically excavated in Manitoba, the discovery of excavatable sites is absolutely essential. Much of our knowledge of these peoples is based on information from sites located great distances from Manitoba. This information in itself is certainly useful, but there may be regional differences in the Manitoba sequence that do not pertain to other areas. So while we can rely partly on data from elsewhere, we must also develop, from local sites, information that may pertain strictly to Southern Manitoba. The unique place this region occupies in relationship to Glacial Lake Agassiz requires us to solve many of our problems "at home", and the Neepawa area is likely to hold key parts of this intriguing puzzle.



When Lake Agassiz commenced its final decline around 7500 B.C., more and more living space became available in Southern Manitoba. Those who took advantage of the opportunity to occupy it were makers of lanceolate points (small arrows), whose spear points are fairly common within the lowlands. Stemmed points, on the other hand, are never found there, which is taken to mean that their makers (large arrow) confined themselves to the country west of the basin as defined by the Campbell strandline. Why they did so is something of a mystery; either they were in southwestern Manitoba while the lake still stood at the Campbell level, or else they were here after the water plane began to fall but, for reasons that are by no means clear, did not choose to avail themselves of the low country. Only properly excavated sites will allow us to explain the Plano point distribution patterns as they are presently known.

MIDDLE PREHISTORIC PERIOD

AN OVERVIEW

In response to changing environmental conditions following the close of the Ice Age, and the development of specialized hunting and gathering techniques within major regions of North America, a wide range of cultural adaptations became established across the continent. These adaptations are reflected in the kinds of tools the various peoples made and used. The period can be considered to have begun circa 4500 BC in Southern Manitoba (although in other areas the dates may be considerably earlier or later), and lasted until the time of Christ. It was, in general, a time of continued population growth, although in certain areas of the High Plains, an actual population decline seems to have taken place during the first half of the Middle Prehistoric Period.

The following brief outline of Middle Prehistoric cultures from across North America will show how different they were from each other and the degree to which these regional ways of life had changed from that of the Palaeo-Indian period which preceded it.

Along the east coast of the continent, fish and shellfish from the waters of the area formed an important food resource. Fish were hooked, netted, and trapped in "weirs" made of sharpened wood posts and stuck into shallow tidal waters. This innovation provided the people with an abundant and regular food supply which allowed for the establishment of long-term habitation sites in some locales.

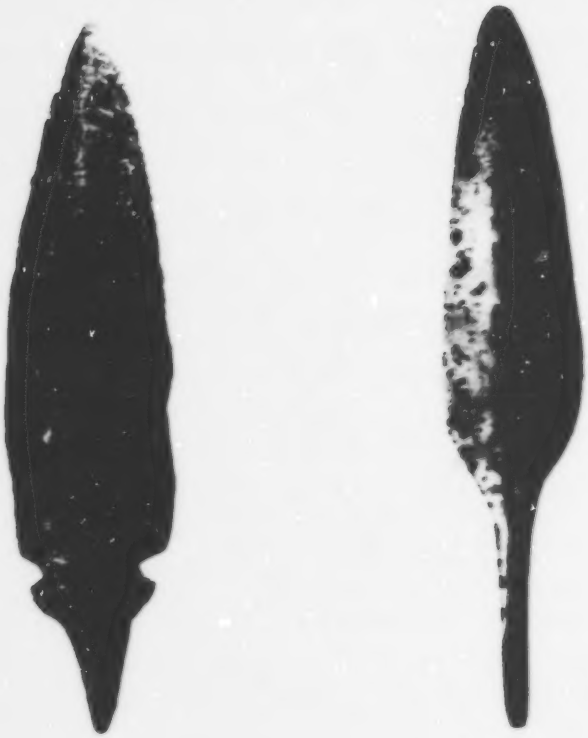
People in the forests or woodlands of the east developed a mixed hunting and gathering economy that focused on such diverse woodland game animals as the deer, turkey, wildcat, and opposum, as well as a variety of freshwater fish and mussels. Their diet was supplemented with a wide range of

plant foods such as hickory nuts, acorns and walnuts. Evidence from their dwelling sites shows that the people could live in one place for considerable periods of time. Their material culture included tools that reflect their forest way of life; wood cutting tools of ground stone are common. They also possessed grinding stones with which to process nuts and berries, stone drills for making hide clothing, flaked stone knives for cutting up food, bone fish-hooks and harpoons, and a variety of projectile points with which to hunt their prey. In addition to these "universal" tools, people living around the Lake Superior area added to their technological repertoire the use of native copper. Nuggets of almost pure copper were found in the glacial drift, and the metal was actually mined on Isle Royale at the western end of the lake. These people were among the first in the world to manufacture tools out of metal. Several of these tools have been found in the Neepawa area.

The Precambrian Shield, with its vast expanses of Boreal Forest, was probably the "birth place" of another important innovation: the birchbark canoe. This lightweight craft provided access to the lakes and inter-connecting river systems of the Shield and, because of the mobility it provided, large areas were opened up to human habitation.

In the desert areas of the American Southwest, hunters and gatherers successfully exploited a very hostile environment for thousands of years. Since game was never abundant, the people relied heavily upon nuts and berries for food, supplemented by virtually anything else that could be killed and eaten, including deer, wild sheep, coyotes, antelope, rabbit, and prairie dog.

On the Great Plains east of the Rocky Mountains, the bison continued to be the principal food throughout the Middle Prehistoric Period. The large herds of bison were hunted using basically the same methods that had been developed during the Early Prehistoric Period.



Copper points of the "Old Copper Culture" from the Neepawa and Area Planning District. The metal from which these artifacts were made probably originated in the Lake Superior region. The leading theory maintains that these forms were introduced into Southern Manitoba via the Winnipeg River some 2000 years before the time of Christ. Artifacts such as these are fairly uncommon in Southern Manitoba, and they were no doubt highly prized by their prehistoric owners.

The specimen on the left is shown natural size (10.5 cm. long). The one on the right is depicted at less than full size, which is 15 cm. in terms of length.

The beginning date of 4500 BC for the Middle Prehistoric Period presents intriguing problems in regards to the archaeological record of the Northern Plains, because it leaves a gap of some 1500 - 2000 years following the end of the Plano occupation of the region. This gap has been explained with reference to the Altithermal drought — the "Dirty Thirties" of ancient prehistory -- that reduced the Central Plains to a near-desert. The drought may have forced the virtual abandonment of much of the region by both bison and man. It has been suggested that even large tracts of the Northern Plains were abandoned, and man retreated into the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains at this time. In doing so, he left the area almost empty, with but a single small population using the region. These people, at present poorly represented in the archaeological record of Manitoba, made large side-notched projectile points with which to kill game. Unfortunately, these points are quite similar in style to some of the later types and hence may not be readily

Points such as the one pictured to the left come from the poorly understood early Middle Prehistoric Period -- a time of near-desert conditions and seemingly low population in the Grasslands. Specimen is natural size.

distinguishable when observed in undateable collections. Therefore, there are several major questions that archaeologists will have to address if this poorly known period is to be better understood: (1) What actually became of

the late Plano peoples? (2) How completely were the Northern Plains abandoned? If the drought was severe enough to dry up Lake Manitoba, is there any reason to expect much in the way of human habitation of the country immediately to the west of it? (3) What are the origins, and who are the ancestors, of the people who began to populate the Plains following the Altithermal? In regards to all of these problems, Southern Manitoba in general and the Neepawa area in particular represent part of this northern "fringe" area. The question of whether or not the Neepawa area was occupied during the Altithermal period, and if so, by whom, is well worth looking into.

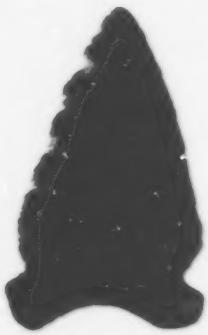
With the return of comparatively cool, moist climatic conditions following the Altithermal, the Plains and Parklands of Southern Manitoba began to re-establish themselves and develop their modern character. Consequently, the population began to increase -- a trend which probably continued throughout the rest of the Middle Prehistoric Period. As was the case with all of the other groups, both before and after, the people of the Middle Prehistoric Period were nomadic hunters and gatherers. It is possible, however, that the experience of the Altithermal had caused the people of the Northern Plains to expand their food base beyond the big game hunting emphasis that was perhaps more typical of the previous Plano period. Animals such as deer, elk, bear and small game, and the lake and riverine resources of waterfowl, fish and molluscs appear to have been utilized, as was a wide range of wild plant foods.

Archaeologists have established a cultural sequence for the Middle Prehistoric Period based on a series of distinctive projectile point types and radiocarbon dates from excavation sites across the Northern Plains. There is a certain amount of overlap among the dates from these complexes, and it is

likely that more than one "ethnic" group occupied the area at the same time. Each group retained its identity, as expressed in their distinctive projectile points, while at the same time adopting ideas from one another that improved their overall way of life.

THE OXBOW CULTURE: 3300 - 1000 BC

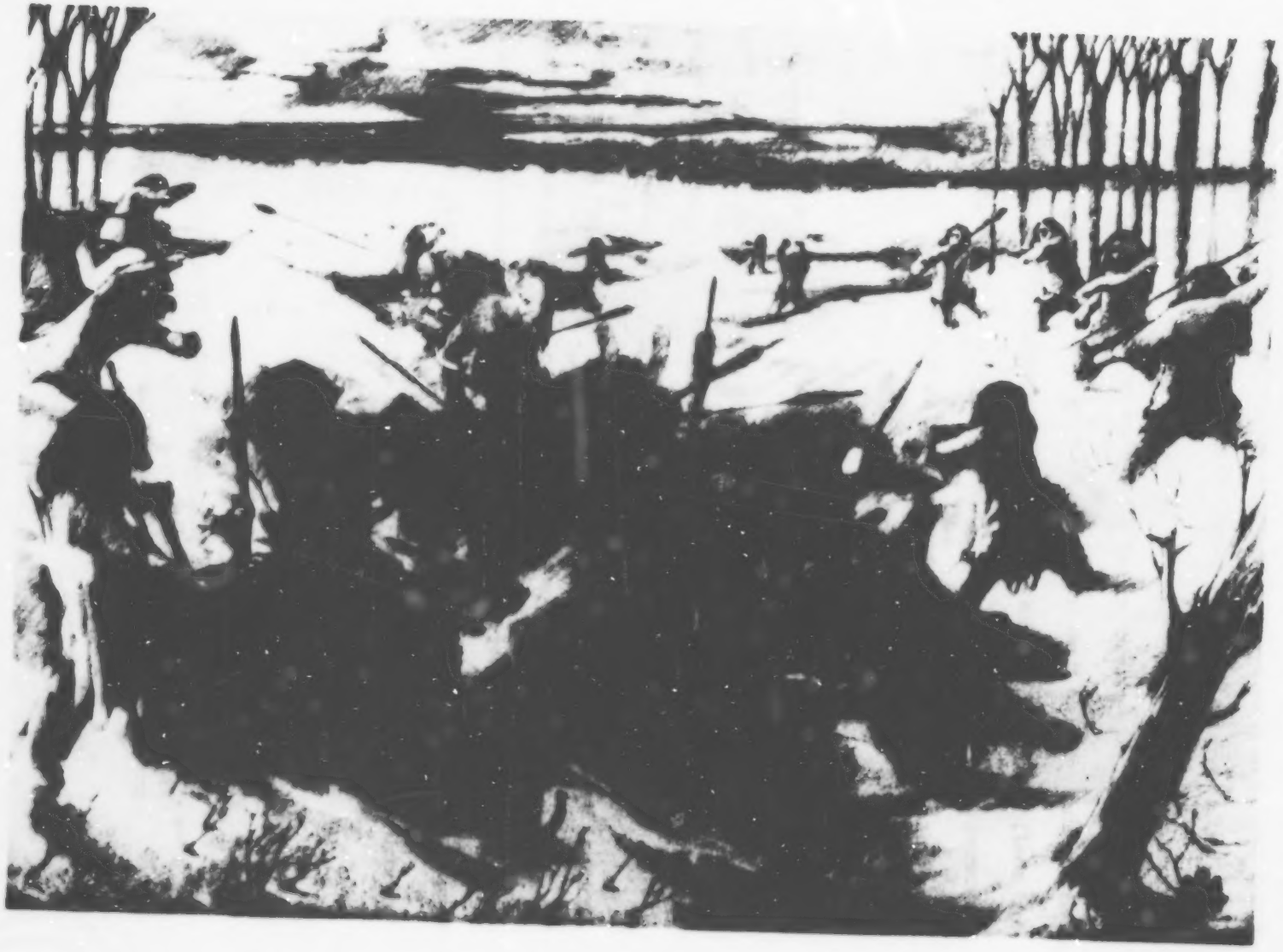
The first group in the Middle Prehistoric cultural sequence is known as "Oxbow", named after the town in southern Saskatchewan where their cultural remains were first scientifically excavated. The Oxbow people most likely moved into Southern Manitoba from the west; dated sites show that the earliest Oxbow discoveries are to be found in the west, while the more recent ones lie to the east and north. Oxbow atlatl points have been found on the Grassland, Parkland, and Boreal Forest environments of southern Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, as well as in Minnesota, Montana, Wyoming and Northwestern Ontario. They range in time from 3300 BC to as recently as 900 AD at Oak Lake in south-western Manitoba. Many have been identified in collections in the Neepawa



Oxbow points from the Neepawa and Area Planning District. Specimens are natural size.

district, and it is clear the area was heavily used by these people. Bison probably formed their main food resource in the Parklands but they also would have hunted other game and exploited the riverine environments as well. Plant foods would also have formed a significant part of their diet.

The scene in the accompanying drawing probably took place many times in the winter environment of the Neepawa area. A band of hunters would drive a small bison herd into a gully or ravine and the animals would mire themselves in the soft snow. Other hunters, lying in wait for the herd, would hurl darts from their atlatls and spears into the foundering animals and kill them. A small, well organized group with clearly defined hunting roles were able to gain large amounts of food and hides using this co-operative technique. Kills by single hunters quite likely supplemented the provisions of the band.



The Oxbow projectile point is side-notched with a concave base, and has characteristic rounded "ears" between the notches and base. Many are found that have been resharpened until very little of the blade is left. Other tools used by the Oxbow people include choppers, oval stone knives, perforators, scrapers, drills and hammerstones.

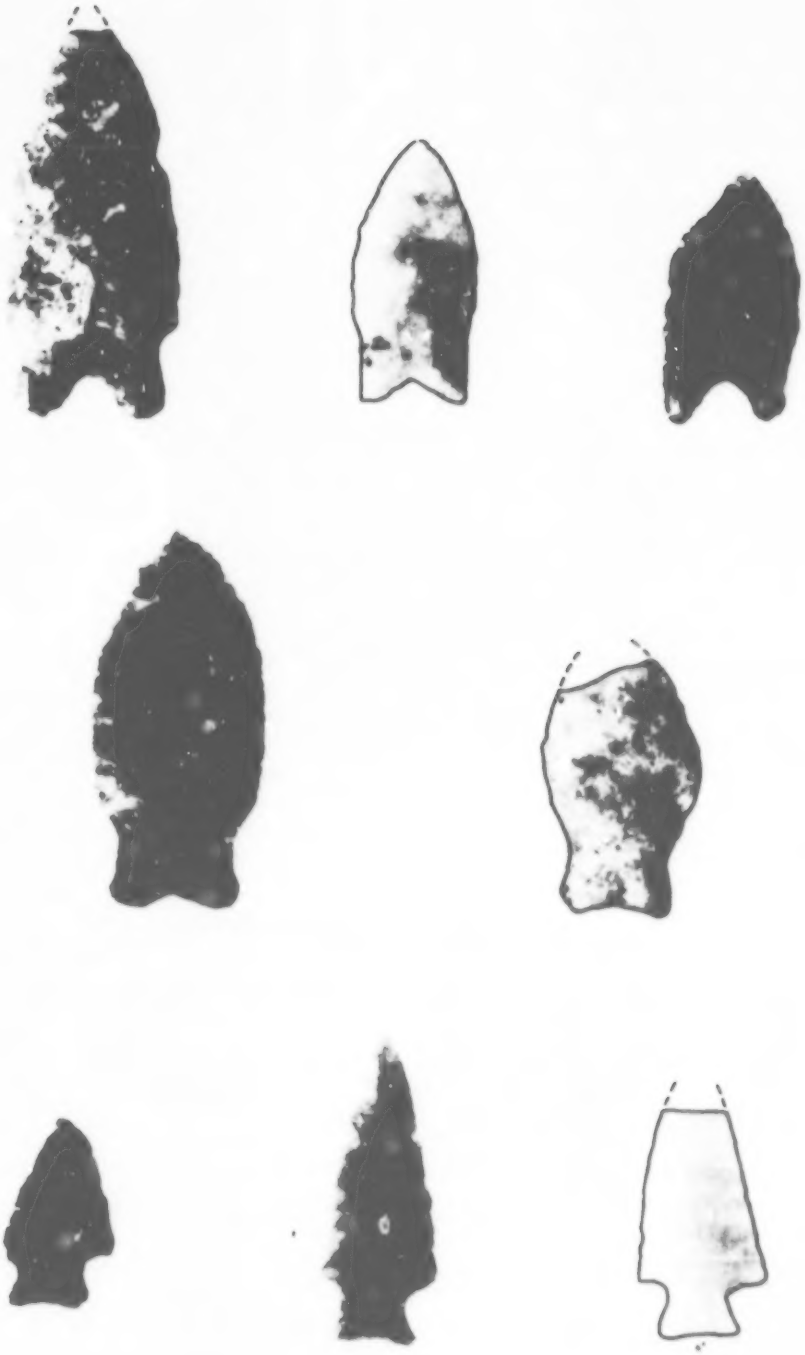
The Oxbow people boiled their food by heating stones until they were red hot and dropping them into birch bark or skin containers. Bone, antler and shell were used to make awls, needles, scrapers and items for personal adornment. As was the case with other peoples of that era, their cultural repertoire did not include pottery or the bow and arrow.

THE McKEAN CULTURE: 3000 - 1000 BC

The McKean Complex includes another group of distinctive projectile points of the Middle Prehistoric Period. It is made up of three types of atlatl and spear point types called "McKean", "Duncan", and "Hanna". The latter two are thought to have evolved from the earlier McKean point type.

McKean sites have been found in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Idaho, Utah and the western part of the Dakotas. In Manitoba, they are found in the Grassland, Parkland, and Boreal Forest. This comprehensive distribution bears witness to the adaptability of the McKean people -- again, possibly part of the legacy of their ancestors' "toughing it out" during the Altithermal.

Projectile points of the McKean Complex from the Neepawa area: top -- McKean; middle -- Duncan; bottom -- Hanna. All figures natural size.



Like the Oxbow people, the McKean groups were hunters and gatherers, bison being their favourite prey. They also sought a wide range of other animals, including fish, and they would have utilized wild plant resources as well.

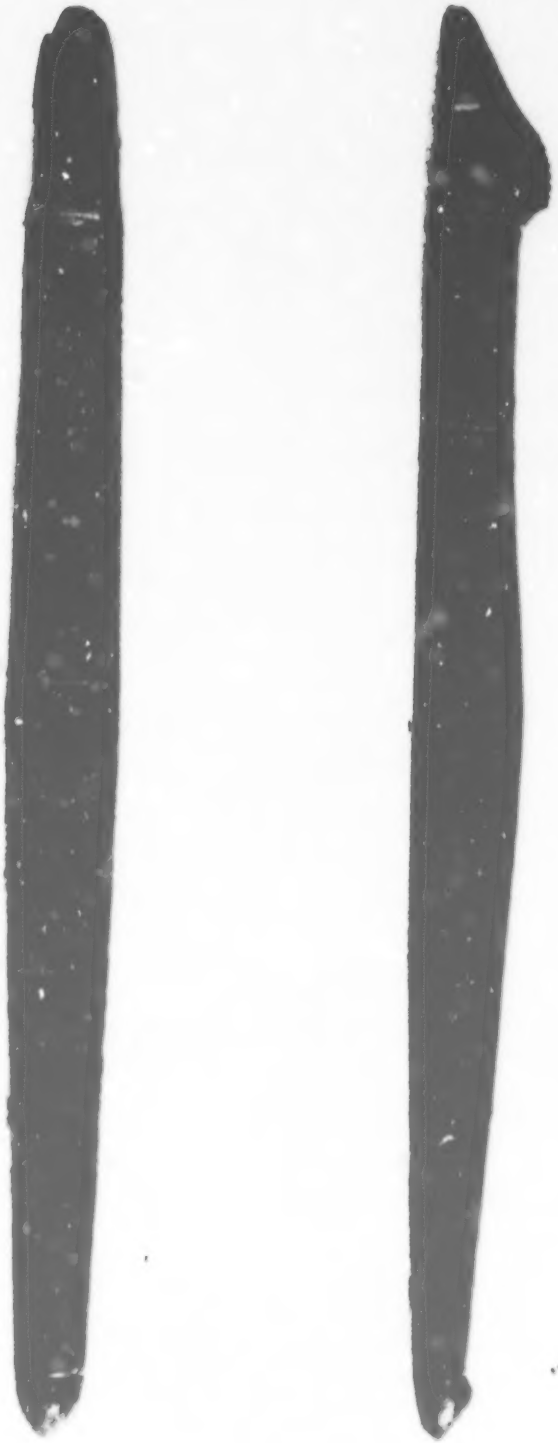
A number of McKean Complex projectile points were found during the survey of the Neepawa area and others occur in collections from the district.

By tying a stone weight to the shaft of an atlatl, thereby making it heavier, extra force would be produced when the dart was thrown. This specimen is carved from stone into the shape of an animal, possibly a snake. Note the grooves at either end which would allow it to be tied to the body of the atlatl. We are unable to estimate the antiquity of this object because atlatl weights are not known to be peculiar to any particular time period and, because this artifact was a surface-find, we do not have any associated material that could be radio-carbon-dated. Once again, the need for careful, well-controlled excavations is obvious.

Specimen is natural size.

THE PELICAN LAKE CULTURE: 1000 BC - 1 AD

The Pelican Lake people are considered to be the final group to occupy the Neepawa area during the Middle Prehistoric Period. The general feeling is that the Pelican Lake Complex is an outgrowth of McKean and that it was also introduced into Manitoba from the west. As is the case with other instances of transition from one culture to another, it is difficult for the archaeologist, with the state of knowledge being as it is, to accurately determine where some parts of the puzzle fit. As always, more work is necessary to determine many of the fine details of the ancient past.



Pelican Lake projectile points are the most numerous of the Middle Prehistoric types found in the artifact collections and archaeological surveys of the Neepawa area. This would seem to indicate a population increase towards the end of this period. As with other Middle Prehistoric groups, the Pelican Lake people were nomadic bison hunters who supplemented their diets with a wide range of plant and animal resources. They utilized both the "jump" and "surround" techniques of communal bison hunting.

The distinctive Pelican Lake points are triangular in shape with notches worked into both corners, leaving pointed barbs above the indentations. Pelican Lake sites have been found in the prairies, Parkland,

Pelican Lake points from the Neepawa and Area Planning District. The item in the upper right hand corner appears to be reworked into a bunt or a scraper. The artifact in the lower right has also been identified by one archaeologist as belonging to the somewhat later "Hopewell Culture" of the American Midwest (see below). All specimens are natural size.

the foothills and southern Boreal Forest environments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Montana, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Manitoba. True to the pattern established by their predecessors, the Pelican Lake people seem, in the long run, to have possessed the flexibility to infiltrate and adapt to a wide range of natural environments. It is little wonder that they and their descendants endured for a thousand years!

Toward the end of the Pelican Lake phase, considerable movement and change was taking place in the areas to the south and southeast of Manitoba. New peoples who had different lifeways and ideas were making their presence felt in Southern Manitoba. This was a period of transition and change in the Manitoba Plains and Parkland. It is to these people that we now turn our attention.

Growing up together, learning their roles in the group and developing skills in hunting, young boys -- future hunters and warriors -- formed close bonds within their own age group that would last for life. They competed with each other in the arts of hunting and fighting, and future leaders would have become recognized by demonstrating superior skills. The "joking relationship" most likely formed part of the overall development that youngsters of each age group experienced. In the accompanying scene, one member of a hunting party is being taken to task for some error committed during the chase. In this way, tensions between friends could be released, each knowing that sooner or later his "turn would come".

LATE PREHISTORIC PERIOD

AN OVERVIEW

The Late Prehistoric Period marks the final era of man's occupation of Southern Manitoba before the coming of the European explorer and trader. It was a dynamic time in the history of the province, with groups of people entering Southern Manitoba from several directions. These peoples brought with them major innovations in their material culture, religious customs, and ways of making a living. These movements and innovations have resulted in a complex archaeological record for the region. Considerable information is available from this period in the Southern Manitoba area, but there have been major differences in the way that the evidence has been interpreted by archaeologists. Since there are alternate possibilities and explanations of the available information, the reader is cautioned that a great deal more work needs to be done before an adequate picture of the Late Prehistoric Period can be produced.

The lifeway of the people living in the Neepawa area during this late period formed part of the "Woodland Tradition", the economy being based on the broad tradition of hunting and gathering. The Woodland pattern of culture was characterized by the first use of pottery by the people of western Manitoba. Moving westward from the forests or woodlands of Minnesota, these migrating groups brought with them, into the Aspen Parklands of Manitoba, a material culture and skills adapted to a forested environment.

The first Woodland inhabitants in southwestern Manitoba were no doubt drawn to the region by the wealth of bison available in the Aspen Parklands, especially during the winter. They hunted their prey with the atlatl and the bow and arrow, and were the first to use the latter weapon in the area.

However, since they had originated in the woodlands to the east, an area with far fewer bison but a much more diversified resource base, they also brought with them skills and knowledge they needed to exploit a wide range of other foods, both plant and animal. Bison was certainly very important, but their economy was somewhat more generalized than that of groups who depended overwhelmingly on the proceeds of the bison hunt.

The environment around Nesepawa, and much of Southern Manitoba, was similar to that of today, with the Aspen Parkland dominating the area. During the winter, when the cold and snows made the prairie areas to the south and west uninhabitable to the bison, the herds moved into the Aspen Parkland where the wooded bluffs offered protection.

It is likely that many of the archaeological sites in the Nesepawa area were used during the winter months, with the people following the bison into the sheltered areas. Once there, the groups erected their camps and, thanks to the readily available wood/fuel resources and the abundance of game, would have passed the winter. Many of them then followed the migrating bison herds back out onto the Plains in the spring.

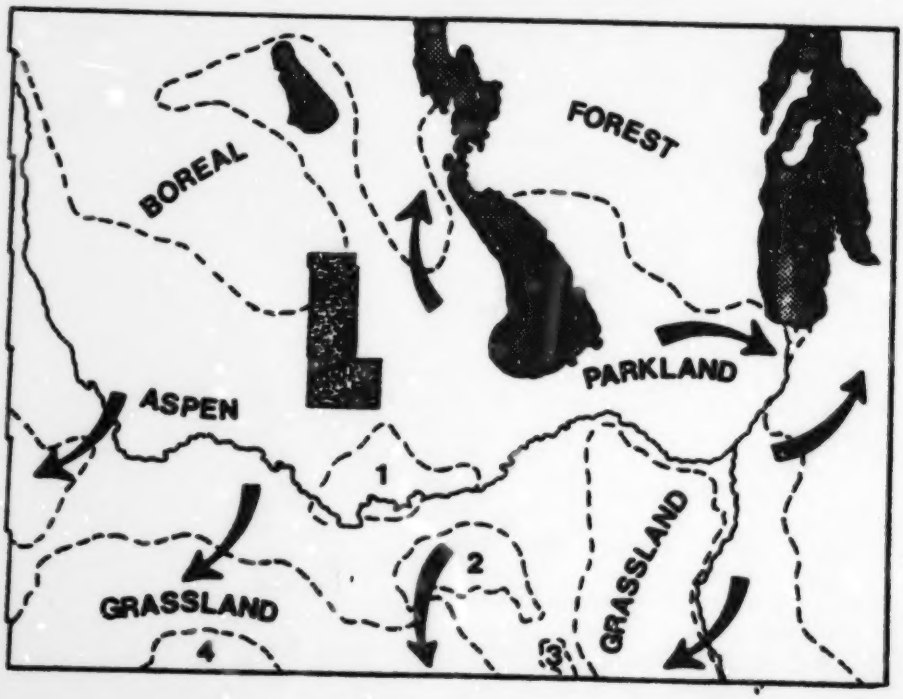
While this is certainly a simplified explanation of the way this area was used by both man and beast in Late Prehistoric times, it is probably accurate by and large. Other factors, such as mild winters that allowed the bison to stay in the Plains, or major fires or droughts that may have altered the migration patterns of the bison would certainly have had their effects on the peoples' seasonal round. It is also possible that the Nesepawa area was not used by large numbers of people on a yearly basis, but only when sufficient bison were present. Nevertheless, since their cultural tradition included a familiarity with forest living, small groups would be able to get

During the Late Prehistoric Period, summer residents of the Grassland to the south and the Boreal Forest to the north would have converged on the Aspen Parkland in late fall to avail themselves of the bison herds. Inasmuch as the Neepawa district was situated well within the Parkland, it can be expected that it was a favoured wintering ground for people from the adjacent areas.

With the onset of spring, most of the bison moved back out on the Grassland. Some of the people followed them; others moved to the fisheries along the shores of the lakes to the east, and others no doubt "stayed put" within the Parkland, particularly along the major rivers, to avail themselves of the various local resources as they came into season.

We must again point out, as we did on p. 47, that the Parkland-Grassland boundary was probably not always in the same place; sometimes it was situated north of the Assiniboine River, sometimes to the south (as shown here). It is unfortunate that we cannot determine where exactly it was at different times, for such factors are important to our understanding of prehistoric man's use of the Southern Manitoba landscape.

LATE FALL



SPRING

through periods of lower bison populations because of their skills and knowledge in obtaining alternative sources of food. As was stated previously, Woodland groups possessed a more generalized economy, with deer, elk, bear, fur-bearers, fish and birds plus a wide variety of edible plants forming their diet in addition to their key resource, bison.

It would be incorrect to suppose that these peoples thought only of food and the hunt. While food was obviously vital for their survival and hunting and gathering provided their means of livelihood, they also had leisure time: time to contemplate, and come to terms with, the world around them.

Rather than living a solitary, wandering lifestyle, the people of Southern Manitoba were members of a complex (although not necessarily always peaceful) community of different tribal groups. In our efforts to understand the culture history of the Parklands and the Plains, we must also consider what was occurring in other parts of the continent as well.

To all of us who have experienced a prairie blizzard from the warm vantage of a centrally-heated house, the thought of living in a skin-covered tipi during such a storm is a bleak prospect. However, it is here, nestled in a protected valley, with the wind and snow blowing around their dwellings and ample food and fuel put aside to assure survival, that the true ingenuity of the early Neepawa residents is best illustrated. To survive and prosper in a harsh climate such as ours, these people would have to have been intimately aware of the resources and environment around them. Their very lives would have depended on their ability to gain food, clothing and shelter during the harshest winter.

This ground stone celt would have been used in the wood-working industries of the prehistoric peoples of the Neepawa area. Trees could have been cut down and the bark removed using such tools, perhaps in the construction of buffalo pounds or in the manufacture of lodge poles. A carefully excavated site, containing these and related objects and features, is required to confirm our current ideas about their function(s) and antiquity. Specimen is approximately 12 cm long.

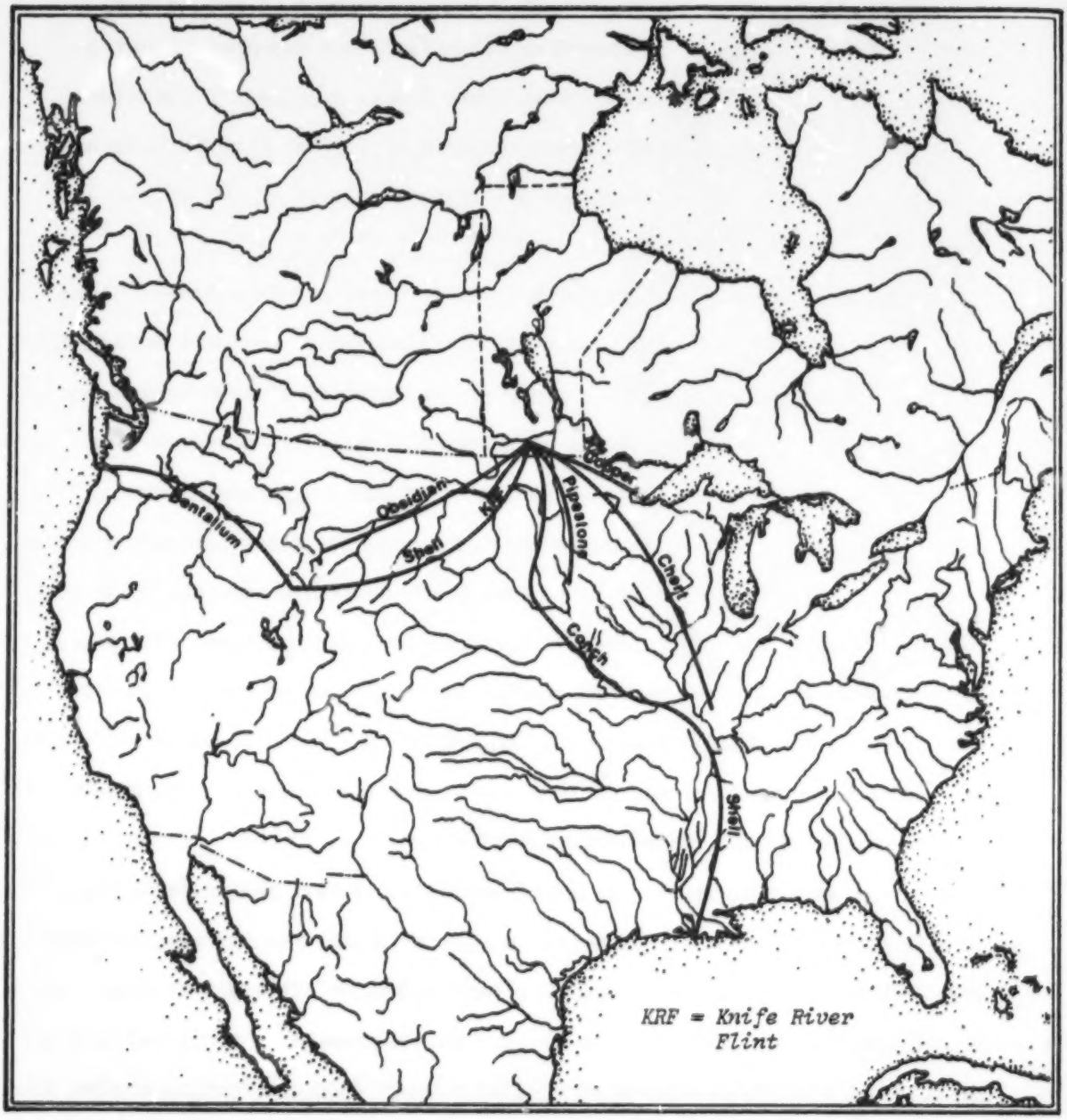
While there is no evidence of any political ties or formal associations between the Plains, Parkland, and forest peoples of interior North America, there was, without doubt, considerable contact between them. These contacts led to the "borrowing" of ideas and concepts and much trade between these peoples. Something that one group had, did, or believed, could be adopted by another group and fitted into their way of life, if it was seen to be useful or of interest.

Many of these borrowed traits were not tangible; that is, they were ideas or concepts adopted from other groups rather than solid objects. Ideas can, however, generate tangible evidence in the archaeological record. The ideas and beliefs of a religion, for example, are not found in the ground, but

some of the items that would be products of new religious practices might be. The burial mounds found across much of Southern Manitoba in the early settler days, and alas now mostly destroyed or vandalized, are examples of such a transfer of ideas into tangible form. These ideas, modified by the local residents of Manitoba and other areas, originated in the Ohio, Illinois and Mississippi valleys to the south and are found over much of the central and eastern parts of the continent.

Many of the actual artifacts found in these mounds and other local archaeological sites also originated in far-flung areas, and were brought into Manitoba via complex trade routes. Copper artifacts from the Lake Superior area and shells from both the Gulf of Mexico and the West Coast have been found in Late Prehistoric sites in Manitoba. Pipestone from Minnesota, obsidian from Wyoming, and large amounts of a superior stone for making tools — the distinctive Knife River Flint from North Dakota — were also part of these trade networks and are found throughout Southern Manitoba. Therefore, considerable contact occurred and trading systems operated that allowed for the spread of ideas and innovations. While Manitoba was a somewhat peripheral area in terms of this trade and commerce, it still formed part of a broad network of interacting tribal groups.

It must be stressed that the peoples who lived in Manitoba during Late Prehistoric times, or during any other period for that matter, were not sedentary residents who lived in one place generation after generation. Rather they must be viewed as nomadic groups who used large tracts of land in their pursuit of the bison and who passed through from one area to another in their annual round of following the herds.



Exotic raw materials that occur in artifact form in Southern Manitoba, and their places of origin, Late Prehistoric Period.

There is little doubt that one nomadic band would come into an area that had previously "belonged" to another and then use it themselves. It is quite likely that more than one group, using different kinds of hunting techniques and technology, could have used the same area, meeting occasionally in their round of yearly activities. Whether these meetings were always peaceful is unknown; it is likely that they were not. However, during some such meetings there is a good possibility that the local residents of the area also traded ideas and goods with the newcomers.

New groups coming from the southeast would probably have encountered people already living here who still made their living using the techniques and tools of the earlier Middle Prehistoric Period previously outlined. Through time, the two groups -- one using the "new" ways of the woodlands and the prior residents who had expertise in hunting bison using pounds or corrals -- merged. This merging of the two cultures produced a basic pattern of resource exploitation centered around the bison herds that was still being used in the area when the first Europeans came in the early 18th century. The pound or corral method of bison hunting was an important innovation as it allowed a cooperative group of hunters to utilize one area for a longer period of time. The pounds were constructed by driving sharpened posts into the ground a few feet apart and laying branches between them to make a sort of fence. The bison would be driven along "runways" into the pound in a manner similar to that employed in the "jump" method. The herd would veer once inside the pound and, seeing no escape, would circle about the fence. Trapped in the corral, the animals became easy prey to the hunters on the outside of the fence. These pounds could be easily repaired and reused.

This outline of the origins and nature of the exploitation of the Neepawa area by the Plains Woodland culture now sets the stage for the presentation of the archaeological record of these events. While the archaeological record may appear to be static and understandable as a neat series of tribal movements into and out of Southern Manitoba through time, this was certainly not the case. The period is much more complex than an easily understood series of events taking place one after the other, like a line of dominoes. Rather, immigration, marriages between groups and the adoption of ideas and material culture between different groups from widely diverse areas all led to the considerable diversity throughout the Late Prehistoric Period. As yet, the details are not completely understood and further work on a wide range of problems related to this period will be necessary before this occurs. It must be remembered that the archaeologists' sources of information -- the stone tools, bones and information on climate, food resources and their use of dating techniques -- can only tell us part of the story; much will likely never be known.

However, to view these dynamic groups of people, who lived successful lives and left for their children an unspoiled heritage, only through the material remains they left does not do them justice. Clearly, some of the reconstruction of the lifeways of these people must rely on the educated imagination of the workers in, and the readers of, their story.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD OF THE LATE PREHISTORIC PERIOD: INTRODUCTION

The following outline of the archaeological record for the Late Prehistoric Period in the Neepawa area is drawn from evidence found there and elsewhere in Southern Manitoba. At this juncture, let us review the procedure used by archaeologists in setting up regional cultural sequences.

In Southern Manitoba, there are two classes of artifacts that are used as time markers -- projectile points and pottery. We have not discussed pottery up to this point because all of the previous cultures are considered to have been "preceramic" -- that is, they existed before the advent of ceramics. We now enter an era during which pottery becomes part of the archaeological record.

Unfortunately, ceramic artifacts are poorly represented in both the results of the survey and the private collections found in the Neepawa area. This scarcity of pottery makes it somewhat difficult to assess the diversity of cultural groups that utilized the Neepawa area. Stone tools from this period, however, are well represented in the collections, and this raises some interesting questions regarding both the prehistoric uses made of the Neepawa area and the season during which it was occupied. The low number of ceramic recoveries indicate that the Neepawa area may have been inhabited primarily during the winter months, when pottery manufacturing was almost impossible. This fits nicely with the hypothesis that the Parklands were utilized mainly during the winter months, with the hunting bands following the in-migrating bison herds from the Grassland summer range. Further south in the Grassland areas, ceramics are much more common, as we might expect of summer sites.

The fact that it is mainly stone tools (projectile points) that are used to develop the Late Prehistoric sequence in the Neepawa area also leads to possible pitfalls in accurately representing the period. For example, it is likely that during the Late Prehistoric Period the diversity of ceramics was much greater than that of the projectile points being used, at least from 1000 AD onwards. That is, different groups may have similar or identical projectile points, but produced very different ceramics. Some of the late

projectile point types in fact occur across much of the Northern Plains and were certainly made by different tribal groups. In other words, for the latter half of the Late Prehistoric Period, the projectile point types are not as distinctive of particular tribes or time periods as they were in the Early and Middle Prehistoric. This complicates our understanding of the already complex problem of determining the cultural sequence of the Late Prehistoric Period. It is known that many southern and western groups of people moved into and out of the Manitoba area during the Historic Period. If this was a pattern that developed during the Late Prehistoric Period, we obviously cannot look to the projectile points as indicators of this cultural diversity, at least not after 1000 AD.

As was stated before, the Late Prehistoric Period is not a straightforward sequence of events. There is considerable overlap in time between cultural groups and co-existence of groups at times during the period. Let us now review the sequence as it is presently known.

THE BESANT CULTURE: 1 AD - 800 AD

The Besant people are believed to have moved into the Southern Manitoba area from the western fringes of the Minnesota woodlands. They were communal bison hunters who used pounds and traps. Since they originated in forested country, their economy was also based on a wide range of resources. Fish, migratory birds, shellfish, deer, elk and a variety of edible plants supplemented the diet.

Besant projectile points are distinctive and many have been found in the Neepawa area. It is likely that the Besant people were the first to use the bow and arrow in Manitoba, although the atlatl was also still used to kill game.

Besant projectile points from the Neepawa area.

Although no Besant pottery was found in the Neepawa area during the survey, it was made by these people. If most of the sites in the Neepawa area were utilized in the winter as we suspect, the lack of ceramics is understandable. Their summer sites in the grasslands to the south, on the other hand, do produce ceramic material. To the west, Besant peoples lived in tipis, as is evidenced by the association of Besant points and tipi rings. In Manitoba, tipis may also have been the living structures used by these peoples.

THE SONOTA CULTURE: 250 - 800 AD

People of the Sonota Culture co-existed with the Besant people during the early part of the Late Prehistoric Period. Their main area of occupation

Projectile points (a, b) and a large hafted biface (c) of the Sonota Culture found in the Neepawa area. Specimens are natural size. Some archaeologists believe that the Sonota findings do not represent a separate culture in its own right, but are simply part and parcel of the Besant Culture.

was south of Manitoba in North and South Dakota, but there are many Sonota sites in Southern Manitoba as well. These people made extensive use of Knife River Flint, almost to the exclusion of all other types of stone in making their tools. A number of their distinctive projectile points have been found locally. Pottery was also used by Sonota people, but again no recoveries of these ceramics have been made in the Neepawa area.

Sonota people were involved in trade with other groups, obtaining obsidian from the west and pipestone from the Minnesota area. It is also likely that they were familiar with "Hopewellian" ideas and concepts, as Sonota people buried their dead in burial mounds. The Hopewellian peoples, based in the Illinois River Valley, were a complex agricultural society whose members lived in large sedentary villages. They buried their dead in huge earthen mounds and had a trade network that reached across much of North America. Their cultural influence was far-reaching and was felt in Southern Manitoba. Indeed, it is the opinion of one expert that the Sonota people were directly involved in the trade of Knife River Flint to the Hopewellians, and this was how the burial mound complex became known to, and was subsequently adopted by, the Sonota people.

THE AVONLEA CULTURE: 400 - 700 AD

The Avonlea people probably originated in the west and moved eastward into Manitoba from Alberta and Saskatchewan. They were expert bison hunters, using the pound and jump techniques to take their prey. They made very fine, thin, minute projectile points that were used to kill bison in the close quarters of the pound or corral. There are indications that as they moved eastward, they met Besant people and adopted some of the cultural traits of the Besant groups. The regional use of the bow and arrow, replacing the sole

An Avonlea point from the Neepawa and Area Planning District. Natural size.

use of the atlatl, and the manufacture of pottery may be traced to the interaction of the Besant and Avonlea peoples. It is likely that the Besant people learned of the pound method of bison hunting from Avonlea people. Only a few of the distinctive Avonlea projectile points have been found in the Neepawa area and it is likely that Avonlea people did not frequent the district as much as they did regions further to the south and west.

* * *

About 800 AD, events to the south of Manitoba were taking place that were to eventually profoundly affect the cultural history of Southern Manitoba. In the Mississippi River Valley, large agricultural settlements were developing, based on the cultivation of beans, corn, sunflowers, and squash. Their populations grew quickly because of the success conferred by their agricultural skills, and sizeable urban centers developed from this agricultural base. Cahokia, the largest of these cities, had a population of some 20,000 people by about 1200 AD. It was the centre of large and elaborate religious ceremonies; and huge mound structures were built by its residents, whose trade networks reached throughout the central part of the continent. Judging by the shape of the mounds and their artistic motifs, it is clear that

The domesticated dog was most definitely a part of the Indians' "cultural repertoire" during the Late Prehistoric Period in Southern Manitoba.

A grooved maul from the Neepawa and Area Planning District. Attached to a handle, such a tool would be useful for breaking bone to extract marrow, crushing nuts and berries, driving tent pegs, or any job that required a sizeable hammer. Many are worn away at either end, an indication of heavy use.

these "Mississippian" people, as they are called, drew much of their culture from the high civilizations of Mexico.

Along the Upper Mississippi and Missouri rivers, tribes of sedentary peoples also practiced agriculture. These villages became centers of trade for the nomadic hunters of the Northern Plains, including those of Southern Manitoba and the Neepawa area.

The nomads from Manitoba, of whom we will speak in some detail later on, were attracted to these Plains villages to the south to trade skins and meat for agricultural products. This custom would have been an easy one to adopt, since movement into the Grasslands (in search of bison) was part of their yearly schedule anyway. That some of the nomads married village women and brought them back to Manitoba with them is suggested by the occurrence of

Spiritual beliefs are a universal human trait. What the beliefs are and how they are expressed varies greatly from culture to culture. Many times, religious customs can influence and be adopted by people of another culture. Such was the case in Southern Manitoba during the Late Prehistoric Period. Highly successful agricultural groups centered in the Illinois, Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys developed elaborate religious ceremonies that were adopted, in whole or in part, by many nomadic groups across North America. Part of the expression of these religious customs was the interment of deceased members of the group in burial mounds, often accompanied by exotic trade goods such as shells, copper items, carved stone objects and funerary pottery.

In Manitoba, the Devils Lake-Sourisford Burial Complex is one expression of these southern religious traits. In the above drawing

surviving members of a group, under the direction of a headman or chief, are building a mound over a deceased relative. Such mounds are found along the Arden Ridge near Neepawa and throughout Southern Manitoba. The carved stone tablet pictured above, although not from a burial, indicates that its maker shared in this complex; we will likely never fully understand the meanings of such carvings. Note, however, the beginnings of a small drill hole (arrow) on the tablet, and see the next page.

The drill hole on the tablet in the preceding illustration may have been put there through the use of a bow-drill (left) or with the aid of a mouthpiece and thong (below).

Missouri River pottery in archaeological sites along the Souris and Pembina rivers.

Thus far, we have not found any evidence in the Neepawa area to suggest that it was directly involved in this trading activity. One culture of southern inspiration that did use the Neepawa area, however, is the one known through the "Devil's Lake-Sourisford Burial Complex". The people who possessed this complex built sizeable burial mounds in northeastern North Dakota, eastern Saskatchewan and southwestern Manitoba between 1000 and 1600 AD. The burial mounds found near Arden, on the Campbell Beach ridge, were created by these people. Unfortunately, the mounds have been almost totally destroyed in the past few decades to obtain gravel and sand for construction purposes.

Pottery-producing cultures have been identified in the archaeological resources of the Neepawa area, and these will be discussed presently. However, since their pottery is so scarce, we must rely on stone projectile points for most of our evidence of occupation of the area during the Late Prehistoric Period. Known as "Plains Side-Notched" and "Prairie Side-Notched" points, they are very common in the Neepawa area. They do show that a considerable population exploited the area, but they shed little light on the "cultural identities" of the people who made them. From our knowledge of other areas, we can state that the people were nomadic bison hunters who exploited both the Grassland and Parkland environments of Southern Manitoba.

If the use of ceramics was generally a summer activity, we must conclude that (1) the Neepawa area was not heavily used during that part of the year, or (2) it was frequented by bands of people, but their routines for some reason or other did not include making and using large amounts of pottery.

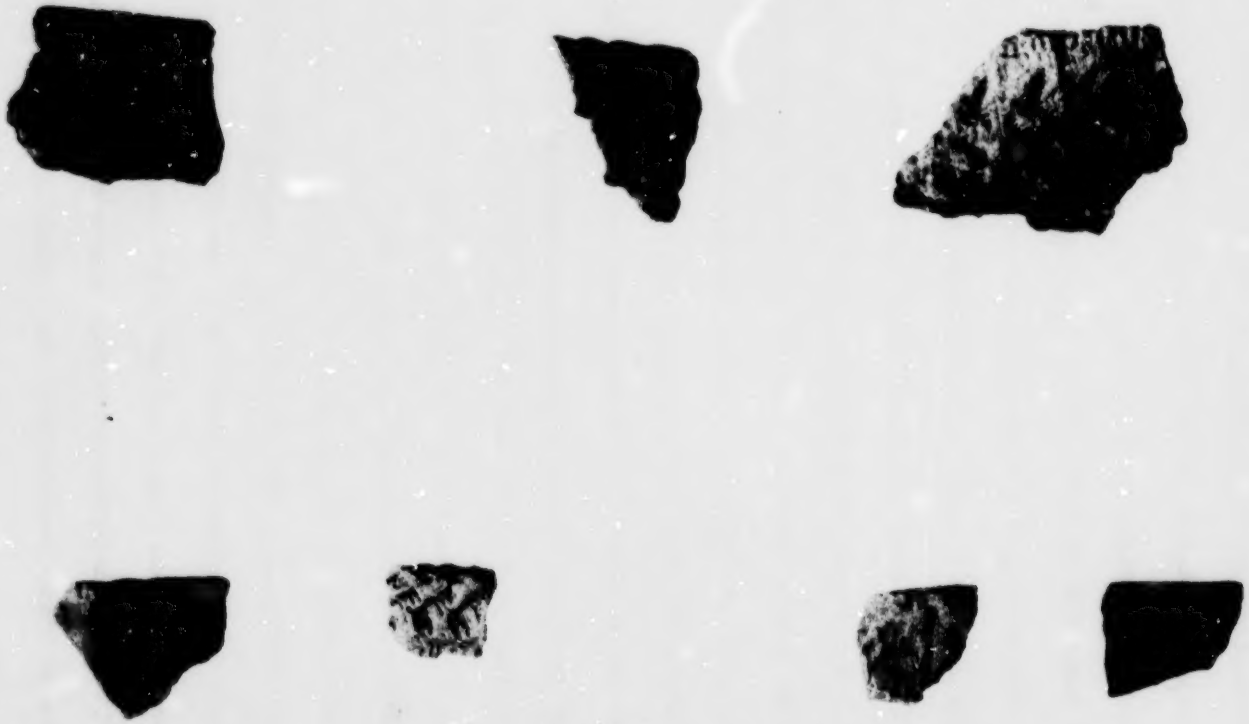
In this scene of day to day life set during the Late Prehistoric Period, a number of activities are taking place. Hides are being prepared for the coming winter. Meat is smoked and dried in the sun. A few clay pots are made for cooking and storage. An experienced flint-knapper is showing the art of making stone tools to a group of young boys. Doubtless, scenes such as this occurred every fall when both man and bison returned to the Parklands from their summer range. At this rich time of the year, nuts, berries and other plant foods would be collected and stored for the bleak months of winter. The wealth of natural resources of the area allowed for leisure times also. Stories of the trip to the south to trade furs for tobacco possibly occupy a few hours for the men passing the pipe.

When the camp is abandoned in the spring, the refuse of the hunt -- broken tools, pottery and waste flakes -- will litter the site. When an archaeologist records such an area, many of the activities that took place can be determined by the type of artifacts left by the group. The better the condition of the site, the more potential reconstruction is possible. Often a site area would be used more than once by different people through the ages. Diagnostic tools such as specific types of projectile points or pottery allow the archaeologist to determine whether the site was used by different groups. The more complete the record is, the more information the archaeologist can gather on how, when and why the site was occupied. Thus, it is important that all artifacts found on a site, whether by a collector, land-owner or archaeologist, can be traced back to their place of origin. It is necessary to record details of the site location and catalogue the material from each site separately if we are to obtain an accurate picture of the past residents of the area.

We suggest that when spring arrived, most people either shifted onto the Grasslands to the south in pursuit of the bison, or stayed in the general district but concentrated themselves at the major fishing spots on Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis, where most of the pottery was made and used. Either way, not much pottery can be expected to show up in inland areas like the Neepawa and Area Planning District.

A few small sherds of what may be "Laurel" pottery were found at one site in the Neepawa area in 1982. This ceramic tradition originated somewhere to the east of Manitoba about 2500 years ago and spread over much of northern Ontario, northern Minnesota, eastern and north-central Manitoba, and north-central Saskatchewan. Only a few sites with this type of pottery have been found in Southern Manitoba west of the Red River. The Laurel people were

Late Prehistoric Projectile points from the Neepawa area. All specimens natural size.



Only a few potsherds were observed in the collections from the Neepawa and Area Planning District. It is possible that, for some reason or other, they were simply not collected to any great extent and hence they are uncommon in the available artifact sample. Alternatively, pottery may <u>in fact</u> be rare in the district, in which case we must find an explanation for this scarcity. Perhaps it is because the area was Aspen Parkland during most of the period when pottery was made hereabouts. If so, it is possible that the district served as a wintering ground and therefore was occupied during a season of the year when the manufacture and use of pottery was at a minimum.

originally adapted to a Boreal Forest-oriented way of life and may only have ventured into the Parkland on rare occasions. It is possible that even the material culture that is known from this group was brought into the Southern Manitoba area by way of trade rather than directly by the Laurel people. In any event, they appear to be incidental players in the development of the prehistoric cultural sequence in southwestern Manitoba.

THE BLACKDUCK CULTURE: 800 - 1400 AD

The best known Late Prehistoric archaeological complex in the Aspen Parklands is the one known as the "Blackduck". This complex also had its roots in the forests to the southeast, and Blackduck sites are found throughout Northwestern Ontario, northern Minnesota and Southern and Central Manitoba. It spread into the Aspen Parkland from around 800 AD and became distributed throughout the area until 1400 AD.

The Blackduck people were likely drawn into the area in part by the herds of bison in the Parklands and Plains of the Southern Manitoba region. They lived a nomad's life geared to the annual Prairie-Parkland migration cycle of the bison. They used bows and arrows and employed both the "jump" and "surround" techniques to kill their prey. A host of other food resources would also have been exploited by these people -- deer, elk, small game, fish, other aquatic resources, and many edible plants.

While their stone tools are largely indistinguishable from those of other groups, their pottery can be readily identified. The vessels were large, fragile, and globular, and were no doubt used for both cooking and storage. They were distinctively decorated with cord-wrapped sticks and fired in open hearths. Very few of these vessels have been found in the Neepawa area, again likely due to the seasonal round of activity of the people. If

the Neepawa area was occupied mainly in the winter, ceramics may have been little used because pottery is fragile and would likely be broken by the extremes of heat and cold.

The Blackduck people used a variety of stones with which to make their tools, but Knife River Flint was obviously preferred. They also had a highly developed bone tool industry, and used hollow stone pipes for smoking tobacco -- a trade item, perhaps obtained from the village people who lived on the Missouri River.

One of the major problems that must be addressed is the question of what happened to these people. They occupied Southern Manitoba near the end of the prehistoric era, and unless they were driven out by newcomers, they were likely in the area at the beginning of the early Historic Period. Some researchers stress that Blackduck people were the ancestors of the Assiniboine Indians. Others argue against that association because the Assiniboine lived well to the southeast of Manitoba in prehistoric times. It remains to be shown if there is any connection between the Blackduck people and the historic Assiniboine. More work will have to be done to address this intriguing problem.

We are now nearing the end of an era. The Native groups occupying Southern Manitoba were soon to experience major changes in their lifeways. The French, English and Spanish were nearing the coasts of the continent, and soon their influence would begin to be felt.

At present, archaeologists do not know whether the people occupying the Southern Manitoba area remained there to meet the newcomers or whether other Indian groups moved in to displace these peoples in the very early Historic Period. One of the challenges of archaeology is to link the events of the Late Prehistoric Period with those of Historic times.

THE "PROTO-HISTORIC" AND HISTORIC PERIODS

The entry of the white man into North America heralded the beginning of major changes and alterations in the lives of the North American Indian. Contact between the white and Native groups did not happen all at one time, nor were the effects the same from group to group. Considerable changes had occurred among many groups even before the whites actually contacted them. Some of the changes were welcomed and seen as beneficial to the people, others brought disease, calamity and chaos to an increasingly endangered way of life.

The period of adjustment to the new order prior to the actual arrival of the white man is known as the "Proto-historic Period". That is, while the effects of their encroachment were being felt, little or no direct contact had yet been made between the two races. In some northwestern areas of Canada, this period lasted up to 200 years or more.

Three European nations, the English, French and Spanish, all influenced the course of events during the Historic Period. Southern Manitoba, because of its location, eventually saw direct or indirect white influences come from three directions, the south, east and north.

The fur trade was the key and over-riding factor that eventually led to dramatic changes in population movements, material culture, and the overall way of life of Manitoba Natives and surrounding tribes. Manitoba had a central place in the development of the fur trade in Western Canada.

The relentless influence of the white colonists and traders in both French and British North America created major disruptions among the tribes of the north-central United States and Eastern Canada. The competition for furs by the whites and their Indian allies and middlemen was intense. Their drive for furs had far-reaching effects across much of the continent.

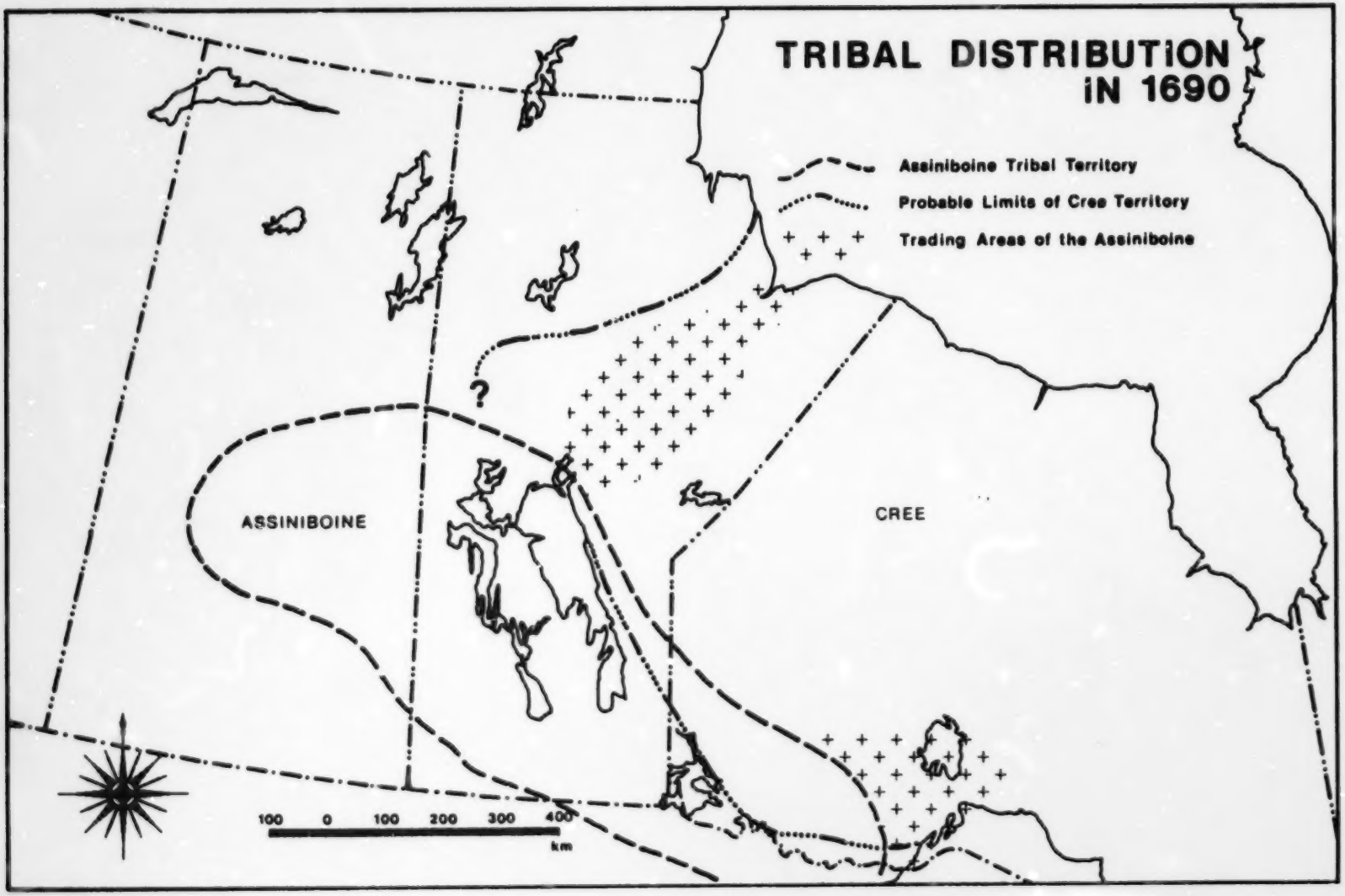
The Iroquois Confederacy, newly armed by the British and well organized, drove westward less powerful groups allied with the French. A "domino effect" was created, with movements of people (and the cultural influences of these movements) occurring south of the Great Lakes and reaching across the American Midwest to the western woodlands of Minnesota, and around the northern Great Lakes into Northwestern Ontario, and on into Manitoba. Tribes of people whose names are familiar — the Sioux, Assiniboine, Cree, and Ojibwa — were all on the move westward at this time. Some shifted out onto the Plains, while others moved northward into the Parklands.

Although a number of other Native tribes used the southern part of the province, the Assiniboine and Cree were the major tribes in the story of the early Historic Period in Manitoba. The Assiniboine, a Siouan-speaking group that had split off from their Sioux relatives and who were now allied with the Cree against the Sioux, had moved north from Minnesota in the early 1600s. These allied groups both traded with Indian middlemen from the east for French goods brought in across northern Ontario.

By the 1670s, when the Hudson's Bay Company was established, the Assiniboines occupied much of Northwestern Ontario. They moved westward soon after, drawn by trade with York Factory at the mouths of the Nelson and Hayes Rivers on Hudson Bay in Northern Manitoba. The Assiniboine of the Parkland and their Cree allies from the Boreal Forest became middlemen in the trade between Hudson's Bay Company posts on Hudson Bay and other Indian tribes further inland to the west. It was the Assiniboine who occupied the Parklands and the Neepawa area during much of the Proto- and Early Historic Period while the Cree would have also used parts of the Parkland during the winter months, moving out of the Boreal Forest into the Parkland to hunt. The Assiniboine and

Here, in a scene of camp life from the Historic Period, many day to day activities are taking place. Women and girls of the band are cleaning and preparing hides for new clothing or tipis. Meat is being hung to be smoked and dried in the sun. Young boys practice the art of archery, preparing for their future lives as hunters and warriors while others play along the banks of the creek.

Today, although the people are long gone and part of the scene can only be imagined, remains of some of these activities are still present in the soils of the Neepawa area. Tools lost or broken by the people during their work can be studied by today's archaeologist to identify certain kinds of activity areas. While many of these sites have been damaged by modern activities, much useful information can yet be gleaned from them. Other sites that still remain as the people left them can add even more to our knowledge of their way of life. What we will eventually know of this past will depend on how we protect our cultural heritage now and in the future. We are presently involved in a race between the gathering of this information and its destruction and loss to both the natural and human forces of today. Once these sites are gone, they are lost forever. If we fail to protect our heritage resources, we will all be the poorer for their loss.

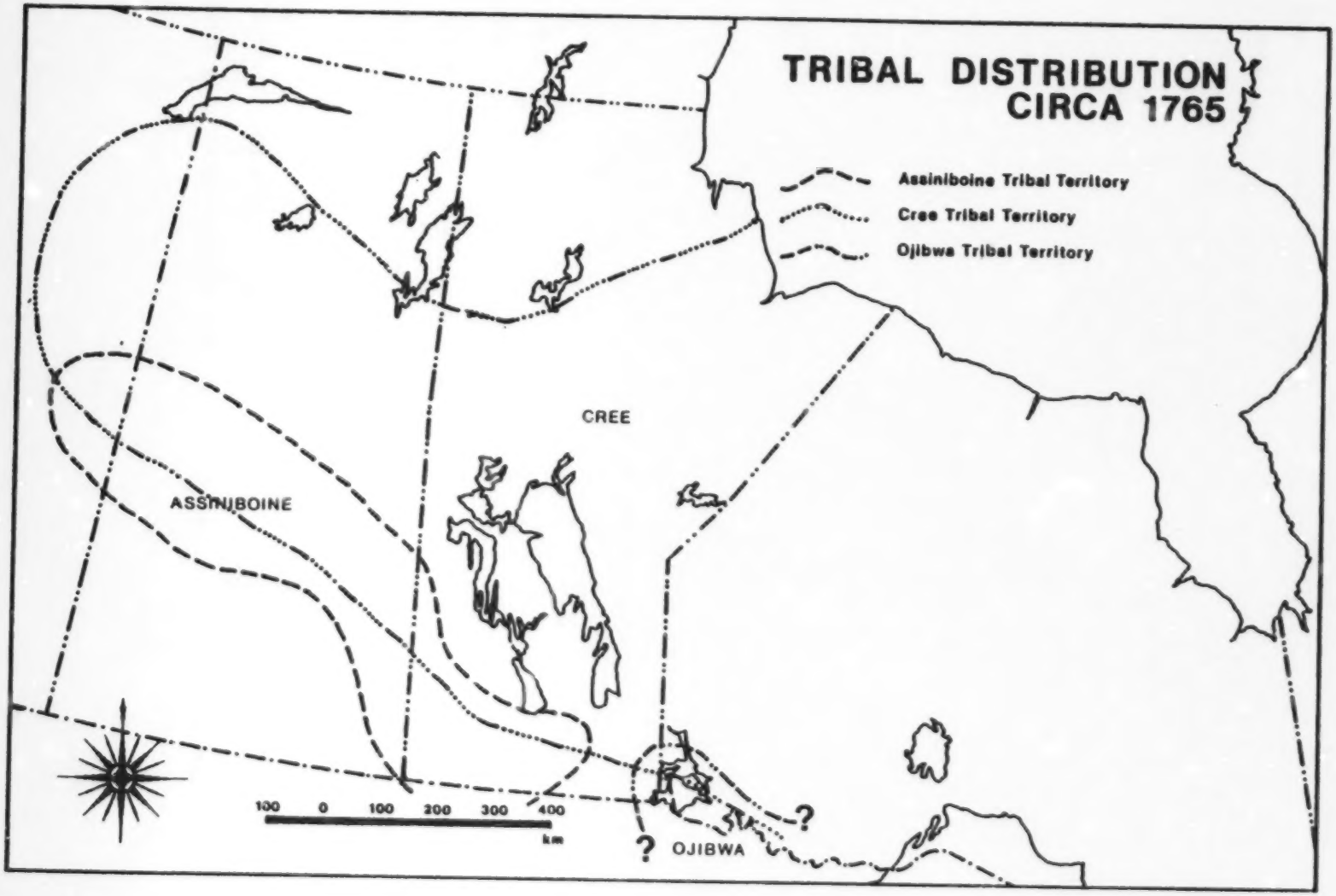

TRIBAL DISTRIBUTION
IN 1690
Assiniboine Tribal Territory
Probable Limits of Cree Territory
Trading Areas of the Assiniboine
?
ASSINIBOINE
CREE
100 0 100 200 300 400
km

Cree would trade their used European goods with western and northern groups for furs at a good profit, and in turn exchange these furs for new trade goods with the Hudson's Bay Company. In their role as middlemen, they profited considerably, became well-armed and powerful, and were essential in the transfer of trade goods from one area to another.

When the French entered Manitoba in the 1730s and '40s in an attempt to compete with the English posts along Hudson Bay, the Assiniboine and Cree continued their role as middlemen with these traders as well, trading both French and English goods with the tribes occupying Saskatchewan and Alberta, and with southern tribes along the Missouri River such as the Mandans. They occupied this key role until after the defeat of the French by the British at Quebec in 1763, and indeed, well on into the late 18th century, at which time the Hudson's Bay Company, the North West Company and independent traders began to build inland fur trading posts in the far west. In so doing, the traders by-passed the Cree and Assinboine as middlemen and dealt directly with the tribes of the western interior of the continent.

One and possibly two short-lived fur trading posts were built in the Planning District. The first was constructed in 1799 by Alexander Henry the Younger. This post was occupied only one winter and was located somewhere on a tributary of the Whitemud River -- possibly somewhere between Naepawa and Eden. It lost money, as the fur trapping in the area was poor, and the ten local Saulteaux (Ojibwa) Indians who hunted for Henry charged extravagant prices for the game they killed.

Another post, occupied for four years, may have been located in the Big Valley area. It too was an unsuccessful venture and it was closed by 1805-6. It would appear that the area was not rich in furs and that even food


TRIBAL DISTRIBUTION
CIRCA 1765
Assiniboine Tribal Territory
Cree Tribal Territory
Ojibwa Tribal Territory
CREE
ASSINIBOINE
OJIBWA
?
?
100 0 100 200 300 400
km

resources at this time were scarce. It is uncertain whether this was an unusual occurrence or whether there were instances of food scarcity in the area that lasted for considerable lengths of time.

Many other posts were built to the south of the study area along the Assiniboine River beginning in the 1760s, and by 1821 more than twenty-five trading houses, several centering in the Brandon area, had been built and abandoned; some were rebuilt in the same general area several times. Earlier, the French had established posts at Portage la Prairie, Dauphin, and the Lake Manitoba Narrows. Further eastward, posts in the Winnipeg area and the mouth of the Winnipeg River were also utilized by the Assiniboine and Cree traders. When the later posts were established further west, the dominance of the Assiniboine and Cree waned, their role as middlemen diminished and finally ended.

While the fur trade was of great importance to the Historic peoples of Southern Manitoba, they also had to make a living off the land. To do this, they followed basically the same pattern as the one pursued by the Late Prehistoric peoples -- bison, their main prey, were hunted in the Parklands in the late fall, winter and spring. They were taken in pounds or trapped in the deep snow and killed. In addition to the bison, waterfowl, fish and plant foods were gathered in season, supplementing the diet of bison meat. Corn, obtained from the Missouri River tribes in trade for European goods, was also an important food item.

The horse was beginning to become important to the residents of Southern Manitoba by the late 18th century. In its wild form, it was a seemingly minor part of the Palaeo-Indians' diet in the Early Prehistoric Period until it became extinct in the Western Hemisphere around 8000 years

ago. It was reintroduced to the New World by the Spaniards in the 1500s during the Conquest of Mexico. From there, it gradually made its way into the hands of the Northern Plains tribes by theft or trade.

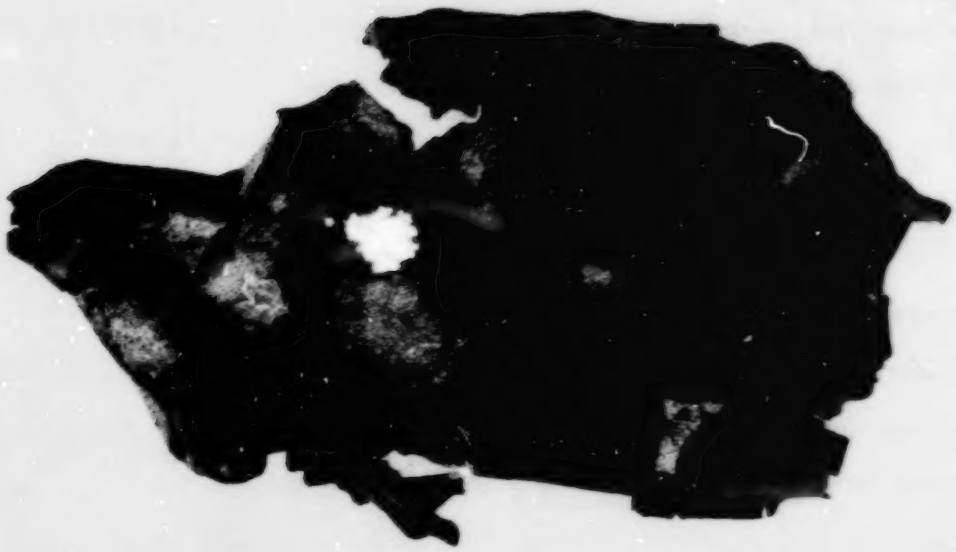
While not as important to the residents of Manitoba as they were to the more westerly Plains tribes, horses did allow for a degree of mobility hitherto unknown. The people no longer had to walk to hunt, trade or make war. It is this Plains Indian horse culture that most people immediately think of when they picture "Indians". However, this dynamic culture, based on the mobility of the horse but still basically following the same pattern of migratory hunting and gathering, lasted only a very short time before it was cut short by the coming of the white trader, hunter and settler.

The Natives' way of life still centered around the migratory bison. For some groups living further west, the disappearance of the great bison herds in the late 1800s saw their lifeway destroyed and their very existence threatened. For the people of Manitoba, however, the destruction of the bison, although serious and disruptive, was less catastrophic than it was for the Plains tribes living to the south and west. The Aspen Parkland, with its

The acquisition of the horse and the mobility that it gave was an important event in the lives of the residents of the Neepawa area during the Historic Period. At first only a few horses would have been acquired by the people, obtained by trade or theft in the late 1700s from groups to the south and west. While our view of horse thieves may be a negative one, the tribes of the Plains saw such theft as a mark of bravery, daring and esteem. All groups had to be on the lookout for members of other tribes attempting to steal horses. The Assiniboine became masters of this act of ritualized "warfare", an act that could easily end in death for the unwary raider.

The horse must have been a welcome addition to the culture of the Native groups who, over time, became well versed in all aspects of horse husbandry. Horses were useful for hauling household effects during the yearly movements from hunting ground to hunting ground. They were a boon for scouting game and driving bison into corrals or over jumps. Mounted raiders could travel long distances to make war. Finally, although the horse was a beast of burden and a working animal, its owner surely enjoyed the pure pleasure of riding a spirited mount.

A "Sorby" blade made by John Sorby and son of Sheffield, England, in the 19th century. Such blades would have been traded into the area by fur traders and used by the Native population as knives or spear points. Specimen is 28.7 cm. long.



A badly damaged copper-coated cooking pot from the Historic Period found in a cultivated field in the Neepawa area. Approximate length, 17 cm.

wide range of resources, could still provide a living, albeit a somewhat less secure and sometimes difficult one, as related in the journal of Alexander Henry the Younger.

In the Neepawa area, the Assiniboine had left before these events took place, moving southward and westward into Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Montana. They were replaced first by Crees and then by Ojibwa (Saulteaux) groups that had moved into the area in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These peoples adjusted to a life in the Parkland and pursued the seasonal round of the bison; many acted as provisioners of meat for the fur

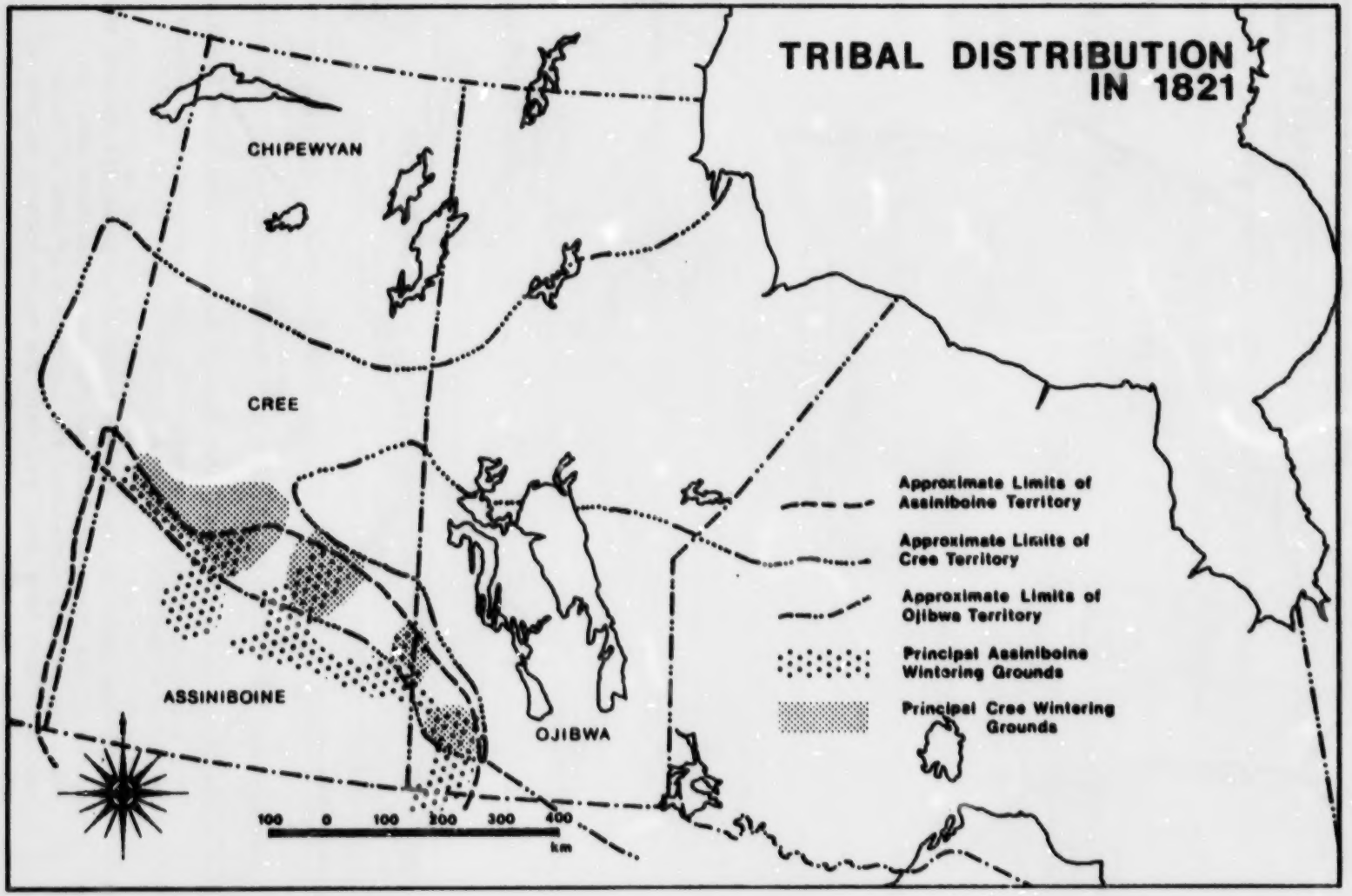
trade. In the summer, on the Plains, they made pemmican from the bison and traded it at the fur trade posts. During the winter they lived in the Parklands, following the same yearly cycle as had the peoples before them. Their descendants now populate many of the reserves of Southern Manitoba. Several bands of Sioux, fleeing from the U.S. army, also settled in Southern Manitoba during the 1870s and '80s.

Another important feature of the early Historic Period in the Neepawa area was the North Branch of the Fort Ellice Trail. First used as hunting trails or "war paths" by local Indian groups, the early days of the fur trade saw these trails increase in importance and become part of a fur trade highway reaching from Fort Garry (Winnipeg) to Fort Edmonton and beyond. The trail crosses the Planning District some three miles north of Neepawa on its route from Fort Garry to Fort Ellice (near present day St. Lazare). It was used by the Hudson's Bay Company to transport goods and as a communication link between their posts, and by Metis hunting brigades that left Fort Garry each year to hunt bison on the Plains and then to bring meat back to the settlement. Later, the trail was used by groups sent out by the Canadian and British governments to explore the potential of the west for settlement.

The expansion of American settlers to the north was potentially threatening to British interests in the Canadian West and in the late 1850s, just prior to the expiry of the Hudson's Bay trade monopoly in the area, two expeditions were dispatched to determine areas of agricultural potential. These parties, led by John Palliser and Henry Youle Hind, both reported that the Whitemud River areas were well suited to agriculture and settlement.

Soon the land was surveyed and the first Euro-Canadian settlers moved into the Neepawa area, lured by the reports of the Palliser and Hind

This accompanying map illustrates the land transportation network in Southern Manitoba during the 1800s. Many of these trails likely followed earlier ones developed by the Native population. Later, they were used by the fur traders and eventually became the routes of the first settlers and farmers in Southern Manitoba. While the railway diminished the importance of some of these routes, others have developed into the major highway systems of present day Manitoba.

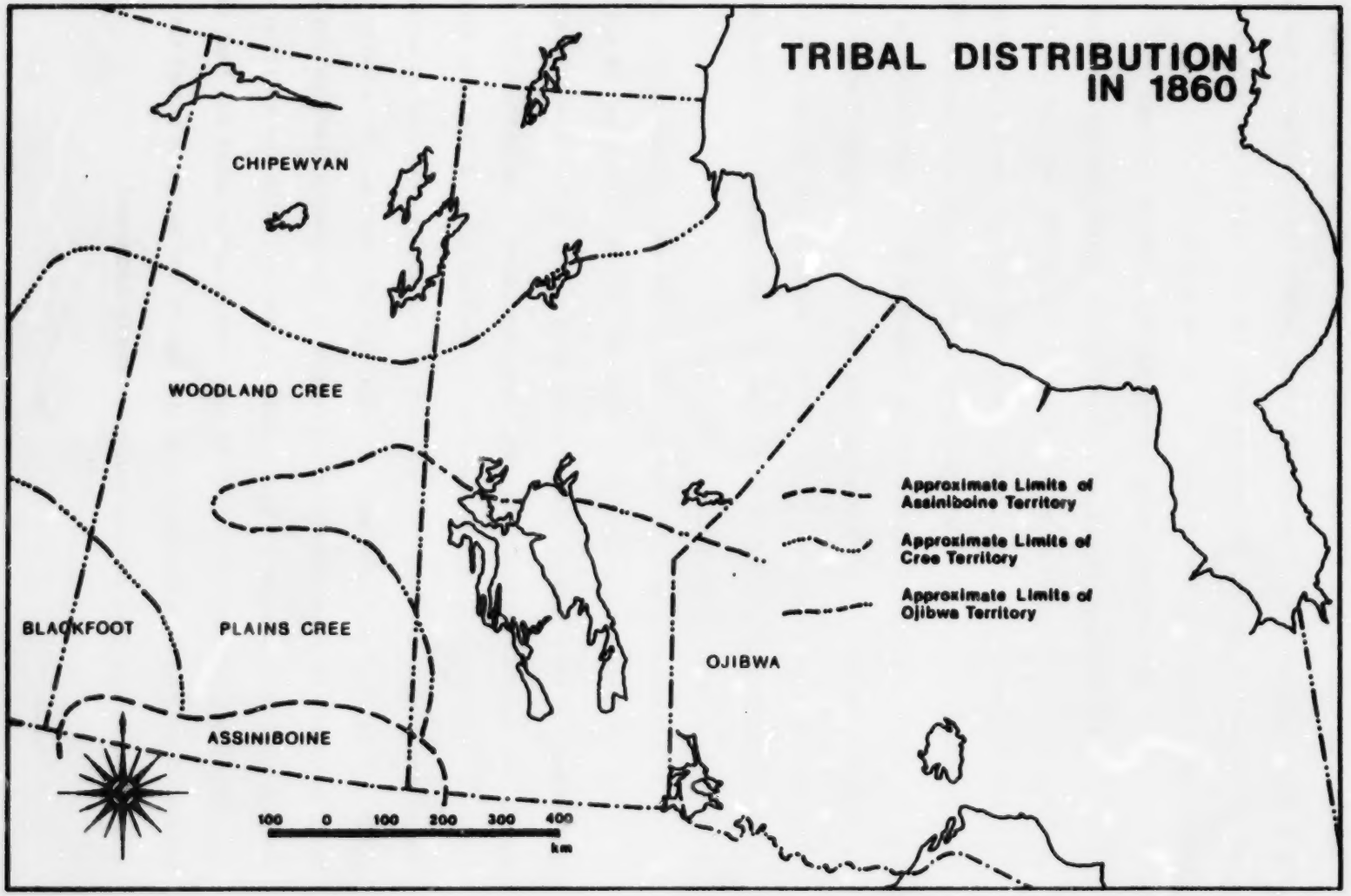

TRIBAL DISTRIBUTION
IN 1821
CHIPEWYAN
CREE
ASSINIBOINE
OJIBWA
Approximate Limits of
Assiniboine Territory
Approximate Limits of
Cree Territory
Approximate Limits of
Ojibwa Territory
Principal Assiniboine
Wintering Grounds
Principal Cree Wintering
Grounds
100 0 100 200 300 400
km

expeditions, each with a 1/4 section and the dream of making a working farm from their labours. While groups of Indian people still hunted in the area and travelled through it, their story had, for all intents and purposes, passed into history in the Neepawa area by the 1920s.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD OF THE HISTORIC PERIOD

Unfortunately, the known archaeological record for this period is a sparse one in the Neepawa area. No sites have been located that contain significant amounts of Historic materials, nor have the two fur trade posts been discovered. Rather, the majority of early Historic artifacts so far located in the Planning District are undocumented finds that reside in private collections and consist of the occasional axe head, clay pipe fragment, iron arrowhead, or gun or trap part. In the surveys conducted in the area by archaeologists, the pattern is similar -- an occasional Historic item showing up in what is otherwise a prehistoric site.

This poses some interesting problems, however, since we can assume the area saw considerable use in the Historic Period. There may be more than one reason for this lack of Historic material. Most of the Historic artifacts located in the surveys come from what are considered to be prehistoric sites, so it is possible that we have incorrectly defined some of the late sites. The Native people may have retained many of the skills they had in making tools out of stone and bone well into the Historic Period. This being the case, many of the sites inhabited by people in the post-contact period may contain tool kits similar to those prior to contact, with the addition of only the occasional European item. Sites that remain undisturbed and that can be excavated will have to be found with the Native and European materials associated before this problem can be properly addressed.


TRIBAL DISTRIBUTION IN 1860
CHIPEWYAN
WOODLAND CREE
BLACKFOOT
PLAINS CREE
ASSINIBOINE
OJIBWA
Approximate Limits of Assiniboine Territory
Approximate Limits of Cree Territory
Approximate Limits of Ojibwa Territory
100 0 100 200 300 400
km

Historic artifacts from the period of European contact and settlement are found scattered across the Planning District. As part of their study of the past, archaeologists make note of these materials: a -- door hinge; b -- square nails; c, d, f -- broken bottle glass; e -- iron projectile point. All specimens are natural size.

Another possible explanation for this general lack of trade items might be that materials such as cloth, tobacco, pipes and liquor formed a goodly portion of the trade and were consumed before the people left the vicinity of the post. The other materials such as knives, guns and axes may have been traded away to other Native groups further west so that little has been actually left in the Neepawa area to be found.

Two other options to be considered are that the area was little used in the Historic Period, or that the Historic sites in the area have yet to be found or have been destroyed. Further work related to all of these possibilities will have to be done before any of these questions can be answered.

AFTERWORD: WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A SITE ON YOUR LAND

Archaeologists have always relied on the public to provide information on the archaeological resources of their area. The province is just too big and the number of archaeologists too small to survey the entire area themselves. A partnership between the public and the archaeologist is necessary if we are to learn more about the prehistory of Manitoba.

If you have a site on your land or a collection of artifacts from your area, we would like to hear about it. Within your collection or from your site may come information that proves to be of great importance in the writing of a chapter on the history of this province. What we would ask of you does not involve a lot of work, nor do we want to keep your specimens. A drawing or photograph of the material and a brief description and map of the area where it was recovered, together with an accurate legal description (1/4 section, township and range) will allow us to pinpoint its location. If a survey is done in the area at a later date or the information you send is of

outstanding importance, an archaeologist can then visit and more closely study your find. At the very least you will receive a letter thanking you for your information and you can be assured that it will be dutifully noted.

We would like to say a few words about arrowhead-collecting, however. Many times, if only the "goodies" are picked up, the relationship between the artifacts found on a site are lost. Therefore we urge you to leave the site as you find it (definitely a difficult thing to do!) and report it to us as you found it. We can then work with you to ensure that the follow-up study of the site is up to standard. Please do not dig or in any way alter the site. You may be destroying important information that you may not recognize as being of value.

In closing, we wish to impress upon our readers the fact that most of the story we have told in this book is based on very slim evidence. Thus far, not a single archaeological site has been scientifically excavated and analyzed in the Neepawa and Area Planning District. The information we have used to develop the above is drawn largely from places outside of the District, with many of our conclusions being based on geographical, historical and anthropological, rather than archaeological, information. The archaeological record thus far accumulated from the Planning District comprises 100% surface finds, and these alone cannot be expected to reveal all there is to know about the region's prehistory. It remains to "anchor" all of these surface finds with carefully excavated, radiocarbon-dated sites within the Planning District -- clearly a job for the future. In the meantime, it is hoped that we have convinced our reader that a fuller and more complete story remains to be told -- provided the sites are still there when the opportunity arises to study them. To ensure that such will be the case, we ask the

citizens of the Planning District to assist the Historic Resources Branch in its efforts to preserve and protect the archaeological heritage of the area. A good way to commence your involvement in this interesting and important work is by obtaining a copy of the book "Introducing Manitoba Archaeology" and reading it carefully. This book can be obtained free of charge from:

Archaeology Division

Historic Resources Branch

3rd Floor, 177 Lombard Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba

R3B 0W5

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